

# **Bolivia**

## **Project Concern International**

### **Summary of Findings**

School feeding for about 120,000 students began in April 2002. Interviews indicate that enrollment and attendance have increased, but conclusive data is not yet available. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the contributions of other organizations are critical to this program's success. Project Concern International's (PCI) monetization budget for the Bolivia project is approximately \$1,770,000; the estimated value of counterpart contributions, both in-kind and cash, is \$1,340,000. PCI/Bolivia's counterpart contributions address sustainability issues (by increasing municipal cash contributions, among other things) and contribute to improving the quality of education. Also, PCI/Bolivia is using this project as a model to work toward community development through the school. The program is scheduled to continue through November 2002, with an extension through November 2003.

### **Country Overview**

Seven out of 10 Bolivians live in poverty, and 30 percent of those (around 2.2 million) live in extreme poverty. Poverty is most severe in the rural areas, where 57 percent of the population lives in extreme poverty, without access to a minimum diet.

An estimated 37 percent of the population is illiterate. Four years of education is average, and in rural areas most people have received less than three years of schooling. Of the total illiterate population, 70 percent live in rural areas and 68 percent are women. Only 1.4 percent of male students and 0.7 percent of female students finish secondary school. Repetition rates are high, with students who continue typically taking 12.8 years to complete six years of primary education. The World Bank estimates the cost of repetition at the primary level to be \$30 million per year.

Children's access to formal education is limited by the geographic dispersion of schools and other factors. Many children must walk up to two hours, often without breakfast, to reach school.

### **Commodity Management**

Almost 9,000 metric tons of wheat, non-fat dry milk, corn, oil, and corn-soy blend were delivered between December 2001 and March 2002. The commodities support the program by providing food for direct feeding in the schools. They also support the program administratively and logistically by providing funds through monetization.

## **Project Overview**

**Objectives and implementation status:** Using the school feeding program as a point of entry into the community, PCI has integrated complementary health, nutrition, agriculture, and teacher training programs in its education initiative. The objectives of the project as outlined in the agreement and the implementation status of each follow.

1. **School feeding:** A daily breakfast is provided to about 120,000 students. Feeding began in April 2002. The extension request agreement to feed an additional 50,000 is pending.
2. **Municipal agreements:** Forty-three municipalities have agreed to provide for the transportation and storage of commodities, cooking utensils, and stoves, and to contribute about \$0.50 per month per child enrolled. Parents also contribute about \$0.40 per child per month.
3. **School and parent-teacher organization agreements:** PCI has established agreements with these entities and established food committees in all schools. The parent-teacher organizations and food committees have been trained in storage and handling techniques, inventory control, hygiene, cooking, organization, scheduling, and school breakfast preparation.
4. **Teacher training:** The Bolivian Ministry of Education agreement for \$100,000 is in the negotiation phase. This arrangement, which has not yet started, will provide teacher training and education materials.
5. **De-worming:** The Ministry of Health agreement is in place for nurses to make two annual visits to provide vision and hearing exams, medication to control parasites, and health education. In May 2002, Health Department officials began testing and treatment for parasites.
6. **Solar water disinfection (SODIS):** All PCI supervisors have been trained in the SODIS technology. Teacher and student training has started.
7. **Peace Corps training:** The Peace Corps has trained teachers in basic sanitation and provided technical assistance with school gardens and ecological training.
8. **Complementary projects:** Greenhouse construction, school gardens, and reforestation tree plantings, as well as the oral health/toothbrush campaign, are underway.
9. **Ecological stoves:** Forty field supervisors were trained to construct the alternative ecological stoves. PCI's goal is to have at least 375 of the 1,459 schools using these stoves. So far, 16 teachers have been trained, and seven stoves have been constructed.

**Other donor support:**

<b>PCI GFE Partnerships in Bolivia</b>	
<b>Partner</b>	<b>Scope</b>
Municipal governments (43)	Transportation of commodities, valued at approximately \$76,000; cash contribution of approximately \$530,000 for school breakfasts; and additional cash contributions of approximately \$65,000 for complementary activities, such as greenhouses and ecological stoves.
Ministry of Education	Teacher training.
Ministry of Health (regional and local branches)	Human resources (visits by nurses) for students' hearing/vision exams and possible donation of micronutrients.
Office of First Lady of Bolivia	Payment of sales tax in the wheat monetization (approximately \$148,000).
Community members	Volunteers for preparation of school breakfasts; assistance in monitoring correct use of commodities.
Universities of Potosi, Cochabamba, Oruro, and La Paz	Participation of students from various fields in project implementation. From La Paz, students will participate in collection of toothbrushes for dental hygiene.
SODIS Foundation	Training for teachers in solar water disinfection.
SABIN Foundation	Grant for latrines (\$15,000).
UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	Donation of 41,500 trees for training of children in natural resources/environment.
Private donor through the international distribution systems	Donation of 2,000 pounds of vegetable and flower seeds, valued at over \$20,000, to be used in school gardens.
Colgate-Palmolive	Donation of toothbrushes.
Peace Corps	Volunteers to work with school gardens/protection of the environment.
Radio FIDES	Three radio stations (two AM and one FM) to promote donation of toothbrushes for rural schoolchildren.
Boy Scouts of Bolivia	Collaborate in collection of toothbrushes.

**Sustainability:** Local support for a project has been identified as an essential part of program sustainability. PCI has built this project around local support and counterpart contributions: 1) The municipal counterpart has been increased to ensure proper planning for the purchase of local products when this project ends; 2) Parents contribute financially (cooking gas and transportation of commodities) and donate food from their own harvest; 3) Implementation of school gardens will produce vegetables that will be used in the school breakfast.

Some municipalities are now financially able to respond by themselves to the huge demand for school breakfasts. By increasing the required counterpart every year for the past five years, PCI has developed a mechanism by which the municipality responds to a clear demand by the constituents.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Both the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and PCI are carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities. The USDA local monitor started site visits and data collection in mid-May. Focus groups and interviews have been conducted at some of the sample schools. Enrollment data for the baseline year and the new school year will soon be available.

Attendance data will be collected for the low attendance months of May and June and the high attendance months of September and October. May and June attendance data will be collected in the next round of visits in August, after the winter holidays.

The factors used to identify the 20 sample schools were:

1. The three regional PCI department offices managing the program (eight schools in Cochabamba, seven in Potosi, and five in Oruro).
2. Schools that had new feeding programs versus schools that had feeding under P.L. 480, Title II (15 new schools and five with previous feeding).
3. Peri-urban schools (four urban and 16 remote rural schools).

### **Project Impact**

Feeding began in April 2002. In May, the local monitor was hired and began collecting data and conducting focus groups and interviews. PCI project data is not yet available to assess program impact formally, but preliminary findings from focus groups and interviews indicates an immediate and positive impact, as indicated in the following.

**Enrollment:** The Cochabamba PCI regional office recently noted that enrollment in one remote rural school nearly doubled from 18 students to 32 students since feeding began.

**Attendance:** One regional PCI office in Potosi reported preliminary data indicating a 10-percent increase in attendance in May.

**Special emphasis on girls:** Data is not yet available. The World Food Program reports that while female access to primary school is slightly lower than male access, there is a significant drop in school enrollment by girls when they reach puberty. This program is not serving high school students where the female enrollment and attendance rates appear to be lagging behind male rates.

## **Unanticipated Outcomes**

Interviews with parents, teachers, and school administrators indicate that the feeding program is a unifying force in the community. It provides a tangible opportunity for parents to become acquainted with each other and work toward a common goal. Because of the regular presence of parents in the school, teachers are more accountable to the community. One parent stated, “Now we really have something important to do.” Once they realize the impact they can have and their ability to organize and accomplish objectives, parents take on other school projects. Some parent-teacher associations (PTA’s) have initiated maintenance projects and developed school gardens and sports fields or courts.

## **Lessons Learned**

- Use the school feeding program as a springboard to institute other necessary complementary programs. Such programs are also essential to address educational weaknesses and root causes for non-attendance and to ensure the feeding program is as effective as possible.
- Organizations must establish and maintain community trust. In new school districts (those that had not previously worked with PCI), trust must be established. For successful implementation, dedicated and capable field supervisors are critical to foster trust and to train the PTA as well as to monitor progress and provide technical assistance. Parent organizations had doubts about the seriousness of the project, the quality of the food, their own ability to run it, and a series of problems in organizing themselves. Although some problems are still encountered in effective management, the program has really taken off in the majority of schools. PTA’s find that they can manage the program and contribute toward the project’s goals, and that the benefits are worth it for their children and the community.
- Food service and inventory control backup procedures need to be in place. Occasionally parent volunteers do not show up to cook, or the director is not there, or a teacher monitor is not available. The local supervisors should work with the school director and *Junta* (PTA) to establish backup procedures. All field supervisors should ensure backup procedures are in place so that children are fed every official school day. Also, supervisors will re-emphasize the need to contract for at least one full-time cook in the larger schools and recommend a penalty system for volunteers who habitually do not show up.
- Breakfast should be served as early as possible. In some schools, the breakfast was served as late as an hour before the end of the school day. The timing and logistics of the service can be problematic given reliance on volunteer cooks and the distances they must travel, as well as the time it takes to make a fire and boil water. In some communities, parents are spending the night and serving as the children arrive. For maximum success, the meal must be served as early as possible, and PCI is making a strong effort to ensure this is done.

- Organizations should work with recipients to ensure that the form of commodities is acceptable. There were some problems with the acceptance of the donated food because the products differ from previous programs (P.L. 480, Title II). Although there is great acceptance of the non-fat dry milk, this is not so for the corn and wheat grains. These schools previously received wheat flour (not unmilled grain) and corn-soy blend (not corn grain). There is a cost associated with the milling to make bread, which PCI is solving by assuming responsibility for the milling process.

### **Best Practices**

Public partnerships can enhance school feeding programs. The PCI project has created some excellent public partnerships to complement the school feeding program. PCI is contracting with the Ministry of Education Reform Section to do teacher training and has an agreement with the Ministry of Health for visits by school nurses. The Peace Corps will be providing volunteers to support food distribution, teacher training, and basic sanitation efforts in the areas of hygiene, waste disposal, and gardening. PCI has arranged for the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to donate more than 40,000 tree seedlings for reforestation education.

PCI also established private partnerships, with provided PCI with resources to support efforts in education, nutrition, and health. Colgate-Palmolive will supply toothpaste and toothbrushes to teach dental hygiene. A Boy Scout campaign will collect additional products to support the dental hygiene effort. A private company has donated seed for the school gardens. PCI is also seeking donations from beverage companies for the SODIS program.

A simple calendar menu system was developed to monitor feeding operations. The calendar is a familiar tool as opposed to a complex form. Each month has a space to record beginning and ending inventories, and each day has a suggested menu and a place to record daily meals served. Field supervisors retrieve these pages monthly from all schools. It is a simple way to collect data, monitor rations, and verify inventory use.

To promote sound environmental practices, PCI will encourage the use of ecological stoves in the community through the school feeding program. Built from local materials, sand, and mud, these stoves burn 80 percent more efficiently than open fires. Parents will learn to use and build these wood-burning stoves in schools where gas is not available. It is expected that this technology will be transferred to their homes, which is consistent with reforestation and environmental goals.

To complement the de-worming program, PCI has joined forces with a foundation to promote solar water disinfection. SODIS technology will be transferred from the teacher to the child and the community. The field supervisors have been trained to train the teachers to move the technology to the community through a child-to-child participatory teaching method.

## **Next Steps**

PCI is scheduled to receive the expansion and extension commodity donations from USDA in August 2002. About 50,000 additional students will be fed. The project will continue through November 2003.

PCI is still negotiating with the Ministry of Education regarding the provision of teacher training to take place by the end of the school year.

Monitoring of the project for compliance with the agreement will continue through March 2003.

## **GFE in Action**

*Worms 10 inches long.* As part of PCI's cooperative agreement with the Ministry of Health, parasite testing and treatment began recently. In a rural school of Tiraque, 50 students were tested, and virtually all had worms. Continued exposure and infestation results in sickness, disease, and other health concerns. Children with worms cannot absorb nutrients properly, and they can become anemic, lethargic, and irritable, which inhibits learning. One parent indicated that her children frequently have worms that are 8-10 inches long.

Treatment has begun in areas vulnerable to parasites. Municipalities are funding the cost for exams and treatment, in addition to the approximately \$0.50 per child per month they normally give. PCI is also focusing on education in hygiene and the use of the SODIS technology in these areas to prevent re-infestation of parasites in these children.

*“Please ALWAYS send the milk! We like it very much.”* After visiting more than 10 schools and talking to parents, teachers, and students, monitors found that the milk drink made with sugar and corn-soy blend was the favorite food, with the rice pudding made with milk and sugar a close second. Initially, the teachers and parents observed slight stomach upsets and some diarrhea during the first few days of serving milk to the children, who were generally not accustomed to it. Nevertheless, the children loved the milk, and their eagerness to eat was obvious—there were no leftovers. As a visiting group was leaving a particularly poor rural school where children didn't have utensils to eat their porridge, a child ran up to the car and shouted with a smile, “Please ALWAYS send the milk! We like it very much.”

*Children are more alert.* When asked about the impact of the program, one teacher said, “The children don't sleep in the afternoon anymore.” Another stated, “They are happier and much more alert.” And another remarked, “They are smarter now.” All noticed the immediate impact of the food on the children's ability to concentrate and stay alert.

*Trying to learn on an empty stomach.* Most children come to school hungry and almost all stay hungry during the day. During school visits, informal surveys of children by show of hands indicated that more than half the children didn't get breakfast. Most

walked at least one-half to one hour to school, and several walked one to two hours. In schools with new feeding programs, about 90 percent of children had previously had nothing to eat the entire school day (typically five hours).

*A celebration of democracy and education.* The school fair provided an excellent opportunity to see all complementary programs rolling out. The press and radio were present to witness the voting that went on during the fair and the citizens' rights and responsibilities themes. The fair also focused on child-to-child education, with children passing the message about nutrition and oral health to other children. A group of children from another school also gave a presentation on SODIS. Horizontal or child-to-child education is an innovative and effective means of communicating messages of democracy, health, and the environment to the community.

## **Bolivia**

### **Adventist Development and Relief Agency**

The agreement with Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) was signed on June 20, 2002, and commodities will arrive for the implementation beginning in January 2003. ADRA plans to conduct a one-year school feeding program that will include direct distribution to children in primary schools. The goal of the program is to improve school enrollment, attendance, and performance for children in primary school in order to increase the likelihood that students will go on to secondary school. To support this objective, ADRA will distribute 1,560 metric tons of bulgur, wheat flour, corn-soy blend, and non-fat dry milk to 87,572 children (approximately 80-90 children per school). ADRA will distribute the food to schools for the preparation of school breakfasts.

ADRA will begin the activities with an orientation for municipalities and educational authorities on the proposed implementation activities. During the course of the program, ADRA will provide support and training for schools and school directors on the organization of school boards, and on program management and administration. This training also includes lessons on food preparation based on the combination of foods donated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and local foods provided by parents. Because this project has not yet been implemented, no data is available.

## **Bolivia**

### **World Food Program**

#### **Summary of Findings**

The World Food Program (WFP) project in Bolivia (technically, two separate projects) focuses on the most depressed areas. In an effort to boost the local economy and production, the Government of Bolivia expressed a preference for local food purchases. Therefore, WFP exchanges the donated U.S. wheat for local products. The daily food

ration provided by WFP for each student provides roughly 800 calories and 26 grams of protein. This program is implemented by local non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and local governments and is co-funded by the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.

### **Commodity Management**

To support this project, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) donated 7,880 metric tons of wheat, which arrived in July 2001. The principal purpose of the USDA-donated food is to provide a strategically timed nutritional supplement, giving an "energy boost" to pupils. In an effort to boost the local economy and production, the Government of Bolivia expressed a preference for local food purchases. Therefore, WFP exchanges the donated wheat for local products, mainly vegetable oil, milk beverages, rice, and iodized salt.

### **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** The objectives of the project are:

- To improve the attention span and learning capacity of primary school students by alleviating short-term hunger.
- To maintain the increase in school attendance levels achieved in the previous phase.

Under the first objective, the program aims to:

- Involve 480 rural schools in the program.
- Provide 33,000 rural school-age children with a nutritional supplement.
- Distribute 26.4 million rations during the project's life.

The aim of the second objective is to ensure that 95 percent of school-age children will be attending school in the project areas.

**Implementation status:** The daily food ration provided by WFP for each student includes about 100 grams of wheat flour, 35 grams of dried milk beverage (milk, cocoa, sugar, and vitamins), 15 grams of vegetable oil, 30 grams of rice, 20 grams of meat, and five grams of iodized salt. The food ration is served 200 days a year and provides roughly 800 calories and 26 grams of protein.

The food provided by WFP is used in combination with food supplied by parents. Because of the combined amounts of food, the children receive both breakfast and lunch at school. This further contributes to an increased nutritional and educational level of the school-age population. Food assistance has contributed greatly to the organization, motivation, and participation of the parent associations. The parents and communities have become directly involved in alleviating short-term hunger for their children. In

summary, food aid has become an incentive for increased school attendance and a catalyst for parental participation.

This project also contributes to a reduction in the intensity of intestinal helminthes infections in the school-age population through a combination of basic environmental sanitation and periodic de-worming campaigns. These are conducted by regional health authorities, with financial and technical support from the World Health Organization (WHO). Children receive a single oral tablet of an anthelmintic once to three times per year.

**Other donor support:** The WHO, in cooperation with regional health authorities, is providing de-worming medication and hygienic education.

The World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank together contribute over \$13 million per year in support of the Government of Bolivia's educational efforts.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, and United Nations Population Fund provide material support and participate in training activities for teachers, parents, and schools.

### **Project Impact**

The project contributes to the education of 50,000 pre-school and primary school children in six of the poorest provinces of the Department of Potosi. The goals are to alleviate short-term hunger, promote regular school attendance, and increase parental participation in the overall management of the education system as a basis for sustainability and phasing out the food aid. Food aid has been a successful cohesive factor in organizing and promoting parent-teacher associations in support of school activities.

The project is an integral part of the new education reform package strongly supported by the World Bank and bilateral donors. It will be implemented through 480 rural schools, where parent associations will be responsible for administering the school feeding component. This is in line with both the Education Reform Law and the Popular Participation Law, which transfer responsibility for education and health activities to municipalities and, at the community level, to grass-roots organizations. The project was financially supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development until mid-1997, when the regional development organization for the region of Potosi took over. The WHO provides technical assistance for the control of intestinal parasitic infection through school-based de-worming campaigns.

The WFP Bolivia school feeding program has brought more children into the classroom. Enrollment levels have increased every year for the last three years. The number of certified teachers has not grown proportionately with the enrollment increases, so more teachers are needed. Enhanced data collection on school attendance, grade progression, and retention is also needed for future evaluation efforts.

# **Dominican Republic Technical Secretariat of the Presidency, Government of the Dominican Republic**

## **Summary of Findings**

The Government of the Dominican Republic (GODR) project is a comprehensive effort to develop capacity at the national level to administer school feeding programs through local community organizations. Last year, the groundwork to award grants to local organizations began. Non-governmental organizations, community organizations, and other GODR agencies submitted proposals to serve poor rural schools in their communities, and 16 organizations were selected. This model government-to-government project is expected to feed approximately 30,000 children and benefit an additional 28,000 indirectly through educational improvements. Logistics, training, construction, and education activities began in June 2002. School feeding is scheduled to begin in September 2002 and to continue for two school years until June 2004.

## **Country Overview**

Given the uneven distribution of income in Latin America, poverty is greater than per capita income data alone may indicate. The debt crisis of the 1980's exacerbated the situation. Incomes fell, inequality increased, and the number of people living in poverty rose by at least 40 million or 22 percent during the decade.<sup>1</sup> In the Dominican Republic, conditions worsened considerably along with high inflation and limited government social services.<sup>2</sup> In the late 1990's, however, the Dominican Republic was often cited as an economic miracle. The 2000 United Nations Human Development Report on the Dominican Republic reported that, "Growth rates have averaged above 7 percent in the last four years. Nevertheless, serious problems exist with regard to the quality of social services provided by the public sector."<sup>3</sup> An estimated 25 percent of the population suffers from poverty, with poverty being more severe in rural areas and especially in border provinces.<sup>4</sup> The worst poverty rates are for rural families in which the head of household works in agriculture.<sup>5</sup>

In rural areas, 20 percent of the population has had no formal schooling, compared with 10 percent in urban areas. The difference is even more pronounced when considering those who have studied beyond primary school. In rural areas, the figure is one-sixth that of urban areas,<sup>6</sup> and the illiteracy rate is nearly three times higher in rural areas than in urban areas.

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<sup>1</sup> A Strategy for Poverty Reduction. IADB. 1997. Updated 2/5/02.

<sup>2</sup> Human Development Report Dominican Republic, 2000. UNDP. (Translated by USDA/FAS).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Country Assistance Strategy, 1997. InterAmerican Development Bank/DR.

<sup>5</sup> Op cit. UNDP.

<sup>6</sup> Op cit. UNDP.

The Global Food for Education (GFE) project was developed by the GODR with the assistance of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA-FAS) and Food and Nutrition Service. The project is consistent with the World Bank's recommendation that the government "...develop a more comprehensive poverty reduction strategy that (i) streamlines, integrates and coordinates its ongoing programs, including international aid; (ii) rationalize(s) and targets expenditure towards the poor and most vulnerable, particularly in the social sectors; and (iii) decentralize(s) decision making and foster(s) community participation for the delivery of services to the poor."<sup>7</sup>

The GODR GFE project is targeted primarily at six eastern provinces of the island in which the problems of malnutrition, illiteracy, and poverty were among the most severe. The provinces are Monte Plata, El Seibo, Hato Mayor, Samana, San Pedro de Macorís, and three communities within the Federal District. According to the poverty map of the National Planning Office, ONAPLAN, Monte Plata, El Seibo, and Samana are the three poorest provinces in the eastern region of the country. The other three are not far behind. The World Food Program (WFP) GFE program is targeted in Comendador Province bordering Haiti, where there is a significant presence of Haitian immigrants.

### **Commodity Management**

The GODR requested 62,200 metric tons of commodities (50,000 tons of wheat and 12,200 tons of soy bean oil). The commodities were to be monetized and the proceeds used to implement the project's multiple components to increase enrollment, attendance, and performance, and to enhance the learning environment. Three shipments of commodities arrived as scheduled and monetization took place without a problem, earning \$11.5 million. The proceeds were deposited into a special account managed by the Program Executive Council made up of representatives from the Technical Secretariat of the Presidency, Ministry of Education, USDA-FAS, and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The proceeds from the donation will be used to carry out community-based school feeding programs developed by local non-governmental organizations (NGO's) aimed at boosting school enrollment, increasing school attendance, and improving academic performance in primary school students. The project will be completed in 2004.

### **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** In order to meet the overall goals of the GFE project (that is, to increase enrollment, attendance, and performance, especially for girls, and to improve child nutrition and health status), the Program Executive Council proposed to carry out the following objectives:

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<sup>7</sup> World Bank Country Brief. [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org). June 2002.

- Working through NGO's, establish model community-based food programs in under-served areas.
- Serve 30,000 rations daily to pre-primary and primary school children and their teachers.
- Strengthen parent-teacher organizations.
- Design and deliver teacher training in such areas as health, nutrition, and teaching methodologies.
- Develop and deliver community health/nutrition educational programs.
- Repair and/or construct educational infrastructure, including building kitchens, making basic repairs, and providing potable water, latrines, and classrooms.
- Improve school water and sanitation facilities.
- Develop local food procurement programs and strengthen local production capacity to meet procurement needs.

**Implementation status:** The Program Executive Council was established as a democratic board to develop the program objectives and implementation strategy, oversee the use of funds, monitor project development and progress, and manage evaluations and audits. A public campaign was held announcing the objectives of the GFE program and inviting NGO's, community organizations, and other GODR agencies to develop proposals with poor rural schools located in their communities, and 67 proposals were received.

As of May 2002, 16 projects were selected for funding, with the first disbursements occurring in the third week of May. The Secretariat of Education is collaborating closely on the GFE program, in most cases providing school rations with government funds so that the GFE funds can be used to carry out other objectives of the project.

The GFE strategy in the Dominican Republic focuses on creating sustainable school feeding and educational programs by strengthening the link between the schools and the community. Scholastic performance and attendance rates are low in the rural areas for several reasons including parental indifference, health problems from lack of potable water and health clinics, economic needs forcing children into work, long distances between schools and communities, and early pregnancies.

The GODR GFE program, in conjunction with local FAS and USAID staff, has approved the following projects as of May 2002.

<b>Implementing Organizations and Projects</b>	
<b>Organization/Institution</b>	<b>Project Activities</b>
World Vision	Repair school infrastructure; implement school and family gardens; install school water and sanitation systems; train health and nutrition promoters; train teachers, parents, and community leaders.
Dominican Institute of Integrated Development (IDDI)	Repair deteriorated schools and build additional classrooms; install school gardens and community poultry production; build school water and sanitation systems; provide teacher and community training in health and hygiene; contribute fruit and vegetable production to school lunch program; conduct child de-worming campaigns.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS)	Repair schools and build new classrooms; provide locally produced rations to school lunch program; build school and community water and sanitation systems; provide training to PTA's and families in health, hygiene, and nutrition.
Center of Solidarity for Women Development (CE-MUJER)	Build school water and sanitation systems; train teachers and parents in community development, education, and health; stimulate improved attendance through community organization; form student councils; provide health/nutrition education.
Social Pastoral of Central Zone (CEZOPAS)	Build and repair school infrastructure and water systems; train parents and community leaders in community development, nutrition, and health; stimulate better health and nutrition through family/student-based agricultural production activities and training.
Center for Investigations and Cultural Support (CIAC)	Stimulate local agricultural production to be used in school lunch program; repair schools and build new classrooms; install water and sanitation systems; train community in health and nutrition; organize PTA's and provide teacher training.
Wings of Equality (Alas)	Organize and train PTA's to manage community food production projects to serve school lunch program; install kitchens and water systems at schools; train teachers, community leaders, and health promoters.
Social Pastoral of Central Zone (CEZOPAS)	Build and repair school infrastructure and water systems; train parents and community leaders in community development, nutrition, and health; stimulate better health and nutrition through family/student-based agricultural production activities and training.
Dominican Health and Well-Being Foundation (FUSABI)	Organize and train community groups and students' families in agricultural production aimed at improving child nutrition and servicing school lunch program; provide community health training, de-worming campaigns, and promote good hygiene practices.
Catholic Relief Services (CRS)	Repair schools and build new classrooms; provide locally produced rations to school lunch program, build school and community water and sanitation systems, provide training to PTA's and families in health, hygiene, and nutrition.
Secretariat of Education (SEE)	Implement school lunch program based on preparation of meals from locally produced foodstuffs; organize and train communities to prepare school lunches; provide training to teachers and PTA's in health and nutrition; conduct de-worming campaigns.
Women in Development (MUDE)	Provide health and sanitation training and stimulate community participation to improve child health and the school environment; build water and sanitation systems at schools; form student councils and work with parents to increase student enrollment and attendance.
Commission Presidential	Repair schools and build additional classrooms; construct water and sanitation systems; train community leaders and promoters in health, hygiene, and nutrition; organize PTA's and involve parents in preparation of school lunches.
Secretariat of Education (SEE)	Convert current lunch program to lunch program based on community produced foodstuffs; build kitchens and water systems required to prepare school lunches; provide training to teachers and PTA's in health and nutrition; conduct de-worming campaigns.
Dominican Institute of Integrated Development (IDDI)	Repair deteriorated schools and build additional classrooms; install school gardens and community poultry production; build school water and sanitation systems, provide teacher and community training in health and hygiene; contribute fruit and vegetable production to school lunch program; conduct child de-worming campaigns.

**Other donor support:** The GODR is carrying out its school feeding program in many of the same areas in which the other GFE projects are being implemented, sometimes with complementary feeding and sometimes with parallel programs to improve the educational environment and eliminate non-food obstacles to student enrollment, attendance, and performance.

**Sustainability:** The government already has an established school feeding program and has made a commitment to continue its work in any GFE community after the GFE project itself ends. There are also aspects of this program that are sustainable beyond GFE, including teacher training, community empowerment, infrastructure development, and community support for education. However, the cost of the complementary food and its distribution is one issue that must be addressed in the program.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** The Program Executive Council will be responsible for monitoring and evaluation activities, but USDA-FAS will also play a significant role. USDA has two full-time staff assigned to the Dominican Republic GFE. They provide project management and will set up the local monitoring system for USDA. The staff member responsible for the monitoring and evaluation began to work with the project implementing organizations to carry out baseline surveys of targeted schools before the end of the 2002 school year in June. Preliminary baseline surveys had not yet been carried out because the list of schools is not yet finalized.

Schools were selected based on different criteria, and USDA trained all project implementing organizations in the use of the questionnaire. Implementing organizations must submit baseline data to the Program Executive Council and USDA by June 30. Once the information is submitted, USDA and the council will validate it and cross tabulate it with the Ministry of Education's database. USDA, the Program Executive Council, and the implementing organizations will coordinate their monitoring and evaluation efforts to the extent possible to avoid redundancies while ensuring independence of action. Because each implementing organization has its own unique project, sampling matrices were developed for each project.

### **Project Impact**

The Secretariat of Education and community-based NGO's have held numerous planning meetings and activities, thereby building the public-private sector coordination and strengthening the link between communities and their schools. This link should be further strengthened as the community-based projects are implemented. Project implementation begins in September 2002.

### **Lessons Learned**

Government-to-government programs such as this one require a significant startup effort where there is no school feeding structure established at either the national or municipal level. A grant award process must be developed, learned, and implemented. Much

planning is necessary for the national and municipal capacity building and training of NGO's. Resources must also be coordinated from other organizations, such as U.S. government agencies, international aid organizations, and national government entities.

### **Next Steps**

Now that the planning phase is over, the Program Executive Council is planning to carry out the objectives of the program and promote the project in order to solicit and award further grants.

The expected outcomes of the first 16 approved projects are:

Participating schools	350
Direct beneficiaries (school children)	58,000
Daily food rations served	30,000
Duration of program	2.5 years
Schools repaired	103
New classrooms built/reconstructed	82
Kitchens repaired/constructed	140
School water systems built/repared	180
Community water systems built/repared	5
School sanitary systems built/repared	180
Family latrines constructed	1,900
School gardens developed	38
Family gardens developed	2,800
Family animal production	1,015
Teachers/community leaders trained	5,000
PTA's organized and trained	305
Children de-wormed	32,000
Health promoters trained	450
Health centers constructed	75
Students vaccinated	1,100

Additional GFE activities that are difficult to quantify include, but are not limited to, the following: parental education; curriculum development; small loans to school families; road repairs; supporting local school food processors; purchases of teaching equipment, school furniture, and school supplies; training in produce handling, food safety, and community organization.

The project will be completed in 2004.

# **Dominican Republic World Food Program**

## **Summary of Findings**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) food assistance has helped play an important role in providing nutritional supplements to school children in the target areas of the Dominican Republic with high levels of food insecurity and low school attendance rates. The World Food Program (WFP) uses USDA commodities to provide a snack and lunch to students attending schools in these regions. Over the last two years, enrollment in schools with existing programs has shown a modest increase of 1.74 percent for boys and 0.87 percent for girls. A similarly modest, though somewhat higher, increase was noted in schools with new feeding programs, where enrollment has been increasing by 1.74 percent for girls and 1.23 percent for boys. Perhaps even more important is the high level of parental participation and contribution to the WFP school feeding program.

## **Commodity Management**

WFP Dominican Republic requested and received 310 metric tons of rice for use in this school feeding project. The rice arrived in November 2001.

## **Project Overview**

This project assists pre-school and primary school children on the border area with Haiti and ensures that all children in the area, regardless of their national origin, are enrolled in schools and provided with meals. The long-term objective of the project is to support the government's 10-year education plan for pre-school and basic education, as well as to increase the consumption of micronutrients for the selected beneficiaries. The WFP project is complementary to the existing government programs that are progressively incorporating the schools receiving WFP food. The project is expected to contribute to the stabilization of student attendance at the schools.

Within the project's geographical area, the targeting of schools is based on the size of the school and road accessibility. Priority is given to multi-grade classrooms (an indicator for very small and poor schools) and to schools located in areas difficult to reach, such as the mountainous Cordillera.

**Goals and objectives:** The immediate objectives of the WFP project are:

- To alleviate short-term hunger through the provision of an enriched school snack and lunch, thereby improving the learning capacity of students at the pre-school and primary levels.

- To enable poor families to send their children to school, with a particular emphasis on girls' access.
- To stimulate community participation in the implementation of the feeding program and education activities.
- To introduce rural, marginalized schools into the government food program.

The expected results of the project during the five years are:

- To provide approximately 95,000 school children in primary and pre-schools in the target areas with a fortified blend, along with cereals, vegetable oil, and sugar. The government programs of de-worming, provision of safe and sanitary facilities, and health/nutrition education are integrated into the school feeding project.
- To assist and enable approximately 95,000 children to regularly attend classes, with particular attention to girls.
- To ensure that all schools (887 total) in the program have parents' associations established and functioning. Activities are implemented to improve knowledge and practice of health/nutrition principles through parent education, special courses for teachers, and educational summer camps.

All primary schools in the country have two sessions—one in the morning and one in the afternoon. A snack made with corn-soy blend is given to children attending in the morning session before the start of the class at 8:00 a.m. to improve their concentration and attention span. Other commodities are used for a lunch that is served at noon for the morning classes and at 1:30 p.m. for the afternoon classes, which start at 2:00 p.m. The afternoon classes also receive a corn-soy blend snack at break time in the afternoon.

The feeding schedule addresses the nutritional needs of children and the two-session school schedule, while reducing the meal preparation time. Community parent associations prepare meals and handle other aspects linked with this activity, such as providing gas for stoves and contributing local foods. Parents are responsible for the management and supervision of the WFP food. Most of the schools have been provided with kitchen utensils for food preparation, and the community contributes other foodstuffs, such as vegetables and condiments.

**Other donor support:** The Ministry of Education contributes \$3,655,288 to support staff salaries, food receipt/transport/warehousing, non-food items, and training. The Inter-American Development Bank (\$52 million) and the World Bank (\$37 million) support project activities in training, de-worming, weight/height census, and other related areas.

**Sustainability:** The high level of community participation is an asset and helps build sustainability for the continuation of school feeding after the GFE project. Government programs for de-worming, provision of safe water and sanitary facilities, and health/nutrition education also constitute a permanent achievement.

## **Project Impact**

Over the last 2 years, enrollment in schools with existing programs has shown a modest increase of 1.74 percent for boys and 0.87 percent for girls. A similarly modest, though somewhat higher, increase was noted in schools with new feeding programs.

In schools with existing feeding programs, student-teacher ratios have remained constant at 38 students per teacher, just as they were in 1998. In schools with new programs, student-teacher ratios have increased from an average of 21 students per teacher to 32 students per teacher. Class size in schools with existing programs has decreased from 50 to 47 students per classroom since 1998. In schools with new programs, class size has remained constant, averaging 40 students per classroom.

One important impact of the project is on the level of community participation in the schools. Primary schools with existing programs had an average of three teachers and 19 community members involved in some way with the school feeding activity. Schools with new feeding programs had significantly higher levels of involvement—an average of three teachers and 255 community members per school.

Food aid plays an important role in providing nutritional supplements to school children in the target areas, which are known to be among the most food insecure areas with the lowest school attendance rates. The school feeding encourages families to maintain their children in school. It also encourages the government to include these schools in the national school feeding program.

# **El Salvador World Food Program**

## **Summary of Findings**

The Government of El Salvador is fully committed to implementing a national school feeding program. The World Food Program's (WFP's) school feeding program complements the government's effort in enabling a full school feeding program implementation by the school year that begins in 2003. Enrollment levels continue to increase with the school feeding, as do the number of students remaining in school to enter higher grade levels.

## **Country Overview**

The end of the internal conflict in El Salvador and the process of pacification of the country since January 1992 brought increased pressure on government social structures. Areas of the country that were previously inaccessible now demand basic services, particularly in health and education, which the public sector is hard-pressed to provide in the short term. Years of conflict and economic crisis have resulted in severe impoverishment of the population. During the 1980's, real per capita income decreased an estimated 20 percent. By 1988, two-thirds of the population (3.5 million persons) was living in poverty, including 1.5 million in extreme poverty without access to a minimum diet.

Malnutrition and related conditions continue to afflict a considerable number of children. Nutritional surveys showed that about 50 percent of children under age 5 had some nutritional deficiency in 1988. Of these, 15.2 percent, or 133,000 children, suffered moderate to severe malnutrition, with the worst deficiencies being found among children 6-36 months old.

The primary education sector shows low enrollment rates and high levels of dropout and repetition. In rural areas, the actual registration of students reached only 57 percent of potential enrollment. Annual dropout and repetition rates in rural areas are estimated at 17 and 19 percent, respectively, with the worst rates in the first, second, and third grades. Given the very difficult economic conditions of most households in rural areas, many families register their children in primary school only to comply with the mandatory school enrollment legislation. Many of these children fail to complete the school year. Of every 100 children entering the first grade, only 19 complete the nine grades of primary education. One of the main reasons given for the dropout rates is that children have to contribute to the family income by obtaining employment or helping out on the family farm at an early age. The other principal reason is that older children have to take care of younger siblings. In rural areas, children from poor families go to school without a proper meal, and their performance suffers.

## **Commodity Management**

USDA provided 9,040 metric tons of commodities to WFP in support of its El Salvador activity entitled “Development of Community-Based Primary Education and Preventative Health Care.”

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
Corn	6,400	August 2001
Rice	2,500	September 2001
Soybean oil	140	September 2001

## **Project Overview**

The improvement in living conditions in districts affected by extreme poverty can only be achieved in the medium- to long-term through economic development programs and social measures that ensure access to basic education and expand the coverage and quality of health services and social security. This project has been designed within this context, focusing on the 133 districts most affected by poverty.

**Goals and objectives:** The objectives of the community-based education component of the WFP project are to:

- Relieve short-term hunger among primary school children through the provision of a school meal.
- Achieve a sustained increase in attendance in the first six grades of primary school in selected districts.

The school meals provided for children from poor families enrolled in the first six grades of primary education are an incentive for them to attend school regularly. In addition, the educational activities organized around the feeding program provide an incentive for parents to keep their children at school. It is also an incentive for them to participate in the parent-teacher associations (PTA's), to improve the school gardens, and to make small improvements and maintain school infrastructure. From previous WFP experience, PTA's increase cooperation with the schools in which a feeding program exists.

**Implementation status:** The activity targets approximately 200,000 children in the first six grades of primary school who are enrolled and attend classes regularly. The school feeding activity has a highly participatory approach because it is managed by parents' committees that support the teaching staff for this purpose. The parents also contribute some vegetables, pulses, sugar, and fuel for preparation of the school meal. A locally produced cereal blend, made from maize (70 percent) and soy (30 percent) is distributed, replacing the milk that was included in previous rations. In primary schools, this blend, with added flavoring, is prepared as a drink. Rice and canned meat are included in the

ration for the sake of variety in the preparation of school meals. For primary school children, the individual ration provides about 481 calories and 13 grams of protein, or about one-fourth of the energy requirements and one-fourth to two-fifths of daily protein requirements.

**Other donor support:** The overall project of which the school feeding activity is a component has broad support from other government ministries as well as other donors. The Ministry of the Presidency and the Ministry of Planning are involved in logistical support of the activity. The Ministry of Health is supporting the feeding activity with deworming and vaccination campaigns. The U.S. Agency for International Development is contributing training materials through its the Maternal and Child Health Survival Project program, and United Nations Children's Fund is assisting the project in developing training for community leaders and is supporting the project through its nutrition surveillance program. The Pan American Health Organization is providing technical assistance to develop nutrition and health education modules. Local community members are contributing in cash and kind for the transportation of the commodities.

**Sustainability:** The government will provide support to the community associations, which on a limited basis are already taking over the administration of pre-primary school facilities and services. Increased government spending on basic education and enhanced community participation should lead to the eventual takeover of project activities.

### **Project Impact**

Over the last three years, enrollment in primary schools increased 2.19 percent for girls and 1.44 percent for boys. With only one exception, average monthly attendance is higher for girls than for boys. How the attendance pattern is affected by the school feeding program has not yet been analyzed.

At the same time as enrollment has increased, student-teacher ratios and class size have declined since 1999. The average student-teacher ratio has dropped from 36 to 32 students per teacher. Class size has decreased from 38 to 33 students per classroom in that same period.

Another important impact is on the level of community participation in education. It is clear that the school feeding program involves many community members. The primary schools with school feeding programs have an average of four teachers and 51 community members involved in some way with the school feeding activity.

## **Guatemala Catholic Relief Services**

### **Summary of Findings**

School feeding and other project activities began in more than 250 schools in June 2002. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has hired local staff, entered into agreements with local non-governmental organizations (NGO's), and has begun its implementation planning and community organization activities. CRS personnel worked with WorldShare, SHARE, other private voluntary organizations (PVO's) in the area, and the Ministry of Education to identify schools to be served and avoid overlap of programs. The CRS project is scheduled to continue through November 2002, with an extension through November 2003 pending approval.

### **Country Overview**

More than 35 years of civil strife and violence left Guatemala one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. Peace accords were signed in 1996, ending a conflict that reportedly left 140,000-200,000 people dead or missing and more than 65,000 internally displaced or refugees. Repatriation and return have begun, but the process is often complicated by land disputes, fear, and mistrust. In the areas most affected by the violence, there is often a generalized mistrust of the government, the armed forces in particular, and any outsiders. These factors have exacerbated Guatemala's challenge in dealing with chronic poverty and its causes and consequences.

In rural areas, only two of every 10 children attend school. Of these, only about 20 percent graduate from sixth grade. –DataPro Monitoring Report

In its "Poverty Reduction Strategy: The Road to Peace," the Government of Guatemala classifies as extremely poor "a person whose consumption is so low that it is not sufficient to cover his daily protein and caloric needs."<sup>8</sup> In the three departments (states) in the CRS Global Food for Education (GFE) project, the vast majority of rural people live in poverty, with 36-56 percent living in extreme poverty.<sup>9</sup> Among the people in those areas, the differences between the indigenous and non-indigenous people are significant. An estimated 88 percent of the indigenous of Baja Verapaz live in poverty, while only 30 percent of the non-indigenous live in those conditions. Among the indigenous people in that department, 56 percent live in extreme poverty, compared with 16 percent of the non-indigenous people.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Poverty Reduction Strategy: The Road to Peace. Government of Guatemala. November 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Guatemala has the highest maternal mortality rate in Central America, the shortest life span, and the highest death rate for children less than 5 years of age.<sup>11</sup> According to the United Nations Development Project's 2000 Human Development Index, Guatemala is in last place in Central America for human development and ranks 120 out of 174 countries in the world. The Institute for Nutrition in Central America and Panama (INCAP) estimates that 240 of 330 Guatemalan municipalities face food security emergencies. More than 46 percent of the population is chronically malnourished, and this figure reaches 69 percent in two departments. Destruction from Hurricane Mitch, several years of drought, and a world coffee crisis have only exacerbated the seriousness of the situation for vulnerable groups.

CRS has targeted Baja Verapaz, San Marcos, and Santa Rosa, three departments that have a poverty rate ranging from 65-75 percent of the general population and a chronic malnutrition rate of 56-69 percent for children under age 5.<sup>12</sup> Three of the four departments that WorldShare has targeted (Huehuetenango, Alta, and Baja Verapaz) have a poverty rate exceeding 75 percent of the general population, and chronic malnutrition affects 56-69 percent of children under 5.<sup>13</sup> In March 2002, the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) declared food emergencies in numerous municipalities in Huehuetenango, San Marcos, Alta, and Baja Verapaz.

“Education for all” is a goal still to be achieved. According to the Government of Guatemala, the poor have only 1.9 years of schooling on average, far below the four years needed to acquire functional literacy and basic mathematical skills.<sup>14</sup> In rural areas only two of every 10 children attend school; of these, only about 20 percent graduate from sixth grade.<sup>15</sup> In one municipality in Huehuetenango, for example, of approximately 2,800 students who began first grade, only 11 reached the sixth grade.<sup>16</sup> In indigenous communities, it is not uncommon for parents to send their children to school for the first three years only, primarily to learn Spanish. There is a steep dropout rate between third and fourth grades. Indeed, many schools in remote areas only offer the first three grades.

Centuries of virtual isolation and lack of educational opportunity have left 31.7 percent of the population unable to speak Spanish. Most people participate only marginally in the national cash economy.<sup>17</sup> Adult literacy is 63.6 percent on average and only 41.5 percent for women.<sup>18</sup>

Within this social and economic context, CRS and WorldShare proposed to target municipalities in nine departments (later reduced to seven to sharpen project focus) in which the problems of malnutrition, illiteracy, and primary school enrollment and

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<sup>11</sup> UNDP Human Development Report 2000.

<sup>12</sup> Op cit. Poverty Reduction Strategy.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> DataPro Monitoring and Evaluation Report April 2002.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> [www.stanford.edu/~libertad/internetguatemala/education](http://www.stanford.edu/~libertad/internetguatemala/education).

<sup>18</sup> [www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/goes/gt](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/goes/gt).

attendance were among the most severe in the country. These departments have primarily indigenous populations and "experience the highest levels of social exclusion, the worst social conditions, and the greatest prevalence of poverty and food insecurity."<sup>19</sup> The school attendance of indigenous children is between 10 and 15 percentage points less than the attendance on non-indigenous children.<sup>20</sup>

CRS, WorldShare, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) shared the expectation that the GFE projects would be able to make a significant contribution in these impoverished areas of Guatemala. The agreement between CRS and USDA was signed Nov. 15, 2001, with an estimated commodity value of \$3,483,160. The agreement between WorldShare and USDA was signed Aug. 6, 2001 with an estimated commodity value of \$2,256,400.

### **Commodity Management**

CRS requested 27,630 metric tons of commodities in the following amounts: corn-soy blend, 390 tons; corn, 390 tons; rice, 390 tons; soybean oil, 160 tons; and bulk yellow corn, 26,300 tons. The corn-soy blend, rice, soybean oil, and non-bulk corn are to be used in direct distribution through feeding and take-home rations. The bulk yellow corn was monetized and the proceeds used to implement the project's multiple components to increase enrollment, attendance, and performance, as well as enhance the learning environment. Three shipments of bulk corn for monetization arrived in December 2001 and February and April 2002. The commodities for direct distribution arrived in December 2001-January 2002. Shipments went relatively well, except 68 bags of corn in the first monetization commodity shipment were damaged.

There was also a delay in starting the project. First, the agreement with USDA had to be completed and signed. Later, monetization shipments were held up by CRS in Baltimore to review contract language. Because of this latter delay, the implementation of school feeding was postponed, and the feeding began in early June 2002 rather than in late January-early February when school started.

### **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** CRS and its implementing partners established multiple goals and objectives for their GFE project. They proposed to carry out the following objectives in order to meet the overall goals of increasing enrollment, attendance, and performance, especially for girls.

- Carry out direct feeding of 26,700 pre-primary and primary school children and their teachers.

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<sup>19</sup> WorldShare GFE Agreement August 2001.

<sup>20</sup> SigloVeintiuno.Lepe, David. 24/4/02, p. 8.

- Distribute monthly take-home rations of five pounds each of yellow corn, rice, and corn-soy blend, and one liter of vegetable oil to students with 80-percent attendance and to teachers with 75-percent participation in training sessions on health, nutrition, and other themes.
- Design and deliver teacher training in health, nutrition, and teaching methodologies.
- Repair educational infrastructure in schools, including kitchens, potable water facilities, and latrines.
- Purchase and distribute educational materials to schools, such as encyclopedias or dictionaries.
- Implement a school garden program.

**Implementation status:** Startup of the project was delayed, as described above, so that CRS was unable to initiate the feeding when classes began in 2002. However, within a short period of time, CRS identified its schools, hired local staff, entered into agreements with local NGO cooperating institutions, and began its implementation planning and community organization activities. CRS personnel worked with WorldShare, SHARE, and the Guatemala Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) to identify schools to be served and to avoid overlap of programs. There was also coordination at the local level to minimize overlap with other PVO's working in the area, and to maximize coverage.

The formal agreement between CRS and MINEDUC was signed in early June 2002. School feeding and other project activities will begin in 251-255 schools in June 2002.

**Other donor support:** MINEDUC is implementing a snack/breakfast program in some of the schools, but CRS has been able to avoid overlap to date. From its own organizational funds, CRS has developed a small grants program. Parent associations can apply for these grants to fund projects to improve their schools and the educational environment.

**Sustainability:** This is a serious issue to be analyzed once the project is fully implemented. Aspects of this program that are sustainable beyond GFE include teacher training, community empowerment, school gardens, infrastructure development, community support for education, and better educated children. MINEDUC's effort to provide school snacks is also a very important step in a sustainable program. However, past efforts by the government to support a school feeding program have not been sustained because of other budgetary priorities. The cost of the food and its distribution are issues that must be addressed in any school feeding program.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Both USDA and CRS will carry out monitoring and evaluation activities. The DataPro organization in Guatemala provides the local monitoring for USDA. The principal monitor is an anthropologist skilled in community-based evaluations. She has begun the process of qualitative data collection and will be leading focus groups of parents, teachers, and students in the next few months. Indigenous groups speak more than 20 languages, and the majority of indigenous women do not speak Spanish well. Native speakers who can interpret into Spanish for the data collection assist the monitor in conducting the focus groups.

CRS, SHARE, and DataPro have coordinated their monitoring and evaluation efforts to avoid redundancies while ensuring independence of action. As a group, the personnel reached a consensus on the factors that could impact a GFE project's success. They agreed that most important factors are the regions of the country for various political, economic, and social reasons; and school population. It was agreed that school size was a proxy indicator for many other important factors. Schools with fewer than 100 students are likely to:

- Be located in more remote, less accessible areas.
- Have poorer infrastructure.
- Have fewer teachers, who are less likely to live in the community.
- Be located in areas of lower population density, meaning longer distances for children to walk to school.
- Have less parental support for education and pride in the school.

All these factors contribute to success or failure of any educational effort. They would also impact the administration and supervision of the project by CRS and its cooperating institutions.

A matrix was developed, and all CRS schools will be distributed on the matrix once CRS finalizes its list of schools. Schools will then be chosen from each cell on a random basis to arrive at the 20 sample schools. During the work session with CRS, WorldShare, SHARE, and DataPro, there was subsequent discussion with DataPro to be sure that the schools would be representative of their GFE projects. Alternate schools will be chosen in case a school should drop out of the project, or some other unforeseen circumstance should occur (such as impassable roads). Preliminary baseline surveys have not yet been carried out because the list of schools is not yet finalized.

### **Lessons Learned**

Because CRS had a longer startup period, it was able to negotiate over the targeted schools and municipalities and thereby avoid the overlap with MINEDUC feeding programs.<sup>21</sup>

### **Next Steps**

With the completion of the startup phase, CRS is planning to carry out the objectives of the project, including direct feeding and distribution of take-home rations; teacher training in health and nutrition; repair and construction of educational infrastructure, including kitchens, and modest payment to a local cook at the school; purchase and distribution of educational materials; and implementation of a school garden program.

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<sup>21</sup> Monitoring and Evaluation Report, May 2002. DataPro, Guatemala City.

## **Guatemala WorldShare**

### **Summary of Findings**

In February 2002, WorldShare distributed school supplies to 67,000 pre-primary and primary school students. School feeding began in March 2002. The primary school enrollment was higher than WorldShare had expected or planned for, based on previous government statistics. In March 2002, WorldShare fed 55,838 primary school students compared with 50,000 projected. In April, 61,092 pre-primary and primary school students were fed. Through WorldShare's Global Food for Education (GFE) project, 15,300 food-scholarship recipients began to receive take-home rations in April 2002; WorldShare had expected 7,000 students. The GFE project has also generated other unanticipated outcomes. Because water is needed for food preparation and cleanup, parents in some schools have been re-energized to try to resolve longstanding problems with lack of water in the schools. The WorldShare GFE program is scheduled to continue through November 2002.

### **Commodity Management**

The requested commodities and amounts were: corn-soy blend, 460 metric tons; non-fat dry milk, 40 tons; rice, 210 tons; vegetable oil, 60 tons; yellow corn, 250 tons; bulk yellow corn, 20,000 tons.

The corn-soy blend, non-fat dry milk, rice, vegetable oil, and non-bulk corn are to be used in direct distribution through feeding and take-home rations. The bulk yellow corn is to be monetized, with the proceeds used to implement the project's multiple components to increase enrollment, attendance, and performance, and to enhance the learning environment. Delivery for the bulk corn to be monetized was set for October 2001, with the arrival of the direct distribution commodities to take place in December 2001.

The shipment of commodities for distribution went relatively well, as did the first monetization commodity shipment of 10,000 tons, except that it was short 198 tons because of a problem of barge capacity. However, the corn was monetized on time, with no major problems. The second monetization shipment of 10,000 tons included an additional 198 tons to make up for the shortage in the first shipment. This shipment, however, presented another problem, because it was 30 days past the dates stipulated in the monetization contract with the local buyer. As a result of the delay, WorldShare had to offer a \$3.00-per-ton discount to compensate the buyer for the late arrival.

There were also delays in getting the letter for the distribution commodities that allows them to enter without taxes. Because of this latter delay, the food did not arrive at the

regional warehouses according to schedule, and feeding had to be postponed. Feeding started in March 2002 instead of late January-early February when school began.

The distribution of the commodities to the regional warehouses and from there to the communities is complex and involves significant community participation. One of the responsibilities of the parents is to ensure that the food gets to their community. WorldShare requires that parents pay a small amount of money into a school fund managed by the parent-school committee. This money pays for transportation from the warehouse to the school, as well as for school-related projects.

The first distribution covering the first three months of feeding was well organized and efficient, in spite of the fact that many of the communities are very remote. In some cases, parents carry 100-pound sacks of corn-soy blend up a mountainside for several hours because the schools are not accessible by vehicle. In other cases, the parent committee is able to rent a truck to deliver the products to the school. In a few cases, the municipal government is working with the community to deliver the food by municipal truck.

The corn-soy blend is widely accepted. It is well received in traditional hot *atole* (porridge/gruel) drinks. Children like the flavor, and mothers know how to cook with it. It should also be noted that one use of the monetization proceeds is for the parent committees to purchase local foods to complement the *atole*. This has been a success because it allows children to eat fruit when it is not traditionally available to them. Furthermore, it helps stimulate the local economy and productive capacity.

### **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** WorldShare and its implementing partner, SHARE de Guatemala, established an ambitious set of goals and objectives for their GFE project. In order to meet the overall goals of increasing enrollment, attendance, and performance, especially for girls, they proposed carrying out the following objectives:

- Feed 12,000 pre-primary children and 50,000-60,000 primary school students.
- Distribute school scholarships to families and boarding schools for 1,000 secondary school boarding students.
- Provide take-home ration food scholarships to families of 6,000 fourth and fifth graders who maintain high attendance and a predetermined grade performance average.
- Purchase and distribute school supplies to 62,000 students and teachers.
- Engage out-of-school children (ages 12-18) in informal education programs.
- Use food-for-work rations for repair and construction of educational infrastructure.
- Conduct literacy programs for at least 200 illiterate adults.
- Design and deliver teacher training programs.

**Implementation status:** WorldShare entered into an agreement with its affiliate, SHARE de Guatemala, to carry out the GFE project in the country. SHARE entered into agreements with four non-governmental organization (NGO) cooperating institutions, identified target schools, hired local staff, and began implementation planning and community organization activities. WorldShare and SHARE de Guatemala personnel worked with CRS and the Guatemalan Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) to identify schools to be served and to avoid overlap of programs. Despite the effort to carefully coordinate activities, MINEDUC began its school feeding program about one month after WorldShare began the GFE program, and there is overlap in some schools. WorldShare also coordinated efforts at the local level to minimize overlap with other PVO's working in the area and to maximize coverage.

WorldShare got a somewhat late start in the direct feeding because of the delay in the delivery of the commodities. Although feeding could not begin at the start of the school year because the distribution commodities were not yet in place, WorldShare provided 67,000 students with a bag of school supplies, including items such as notebooks, pencil, pencil sharpener, eraser, scissors, crayons, and a ruler. The lack of school supplies often presents an obstacle to student enrollment and attendance because parents do not have the money to purchase these items.

School feeding began in March 2002. Pre-primary school enrollment has been lower than planned because of the lack of kindergarten schools and parental disinterest (9,256 actual enrollment in March versus 12,000 planned). On the other hand, primary school enrollment was higher than WorldShare had expected or planned for based on previous MINEDUC statistics. In March 2002, WorldShare fed 55,838 primary school students versus 50,000 projected. In April, 61,092 pre-primary and primary school students were fed. Through WorldShare's GFE project, 15,300 food-scholarship recipients began to receive take-home rations in April 2002, compared with an expected 7,000 students.

WorldShare completed initial teacher and parent training in the control and use of the commodities, as well as management of the school nutrition committee, tracking and documenting expenditures, and financial recordkeeping. This transparency of financial records and careful recordkeeping required by WorldShare builds greater trust among other parents in the workings of the committee. In addition, it promotes a closer working relationship between parents and teachers.

WorldShare has initiated a food scholarship pilot project for 449 students who participate in the *telesecundaria* program, a government distance-learning project aimed at people who dropped out after third grade. WorldShare is also giving literacy classes to 253 adults, many of whom are mothers participating in WorldShare's ongoing maternal-child health project. This is significant because the greatest predictor of a girl's educational level is her mother's. The mothers in the program will be more likely to send their girls to school.

**Other donor support:** MINEDUC is implementing a snack/breakfast program in some of the schools. This has led to some confusion and overlap, but WorldShare is working with

the schools to help them distribute the food in such a way that it maximizes the feeding potential. PRONADE, a government program to assist community-managed schools, gives some basic school snacks on a somewhat irregular basis, student and teacher educational materials, and some teacher training. PRONADE schools are generally in the remotest areas and poorest communities. Three programs through the Ministry of Health provide health education, water and sanitation, and other health services. The Ministry of Health is carrying out de-worming campaigns in some schools.

Some municipal governments are donating transportation and delivering the food commodities to the schools.

There is some activity by the European Union in the construction of infrastructure in some schools.

Plan International is active in a number of communities and carries out a variety of activities, depending on the school. These activities include donations of educational materials, teacher training, and reproductive health training.

**Sustainability:** There is significant parental support for this project, as demonstrated by the high levels of participation and the payment of a small monthly fee for transportation of commodities and school improvements. MINEDUC effort to provide snacks is also a very important step in a sustainable program. However, past efforts by the government to sustain a school feeding program have resulted in programs that ended before the end of the school year because of other budgetary priorities. WorldShare intends to work on identifying potential donors in the private sector this year to begin to develop funding partners.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Both the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and WorldShare are carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities. The DataPro organization in Guatemala provides the local monitoring for USDA. The principal monitor is an anthropologist skilled in community-based evaluations. She has begun the process of qualitative data collection and will be leading focus groups of parents, teachers and students in the next few months. Guatemala has indigenous groups who speak more than 20 languages, and many of the indigenous women do not speak Spanish well. Native speakers who can interpret into Spanish for the data collection will assist the principal monitor in conducting the focus groups.

### **Project Impact**

**Enrollment:** Teachers in almost every sample and non-sample school visited to date reported somewhat higher enrollment and the return of past dropouts. However, not enough data has been collected for a comprehensive analysis. Early indications are that as children find out about the project, they enroll even after the official enrollment period is over. Their presence is then reflected only in the attendance figures.

**Attendance:** Reports indicated that absenteeism has dropped to almost nothing. Furthermore, teachers have noted that punctuality has improved, particularly in those schools that serve the food early in the school day. Both teachers and parents said that the children now stay home from school only when they are truly sick. Enough data has not yet been collected for a statistical analysis.

**Performance:** Teachers report that students are more attentive in class, play with more enthusiasm and energy at recess, and learn more quickly. Teachers tell monitors that, since the school feeding began, it takes them less time and fewer repetitions to teach a lesson before the children learn it.

**Special emphasis on girls:** Data has not yet been collected and analyzed to be able to say with any certainty how enrollment or attendance by girls has been affected. However, it must be stated that Guatemalan girls lag far behind boys in enrollment, attendance, number of years studied, and literacy. Of the girls who do attend primary school, there is a significant drop in enrollment after third grade, which WorldShare is attempting to address through its food scholarship program for fourth and fifth graders.

**Other project achievements:** One of the results of the initial implementation of GFE is that teachers report a stronger parent-school bond. Because they work cooperatively and collaboratively on the feeding (teachers track the commodities, and parents manage the complementary food purchase and snack preparation), they must work together. This is a great advance from the perspective of the teachers, who commented on this frequently.

When the complementary food fund ran out of money, the president of the school nutrition committee offered to use his own money until they received the next advance from WorldShare. That way, he said, the children would not have to go without. Fortunately, the principal was able to advance the money from the school's very small petty cash fund.

### **Unanticipated Outcomes**

Because water is needed for the preparation and cleanup of the *atole*, parents in some schools have been re-energized to try to resolve longstanding problems with lack of water in the school. In Baja Verapaz, for example, children have to bring a jug of water to school to make the *atole*. The parents of Nimacabaj are trying to finish a water system so that the school will have water.

Teachers in one school reported that because of parental participation in the feeding program, students now show a greater interest in school government and are helping to carry out the snack program.

It is worth noting that the commitment of parents in becoming involved in a public leadership role requires self-sacrifice and courage. During the long armed conflict,

community leaders were frequently the targets of assassination. That parents would be willing to assume these public leadership roles, and allow their children to do so, speaks volumes about their commitment to the GFE project and the benefit they see for their children.

Some parents report that they have received lectures from their children on the need to wash their hands before eating and after using the latrine—lessons the children learned at school in conjunction with the GFE feeding.

### **Lessons Learned**

Although it is very early in the WorldShare/SHARE project in Guatemala, some simple lessons have been learned.

Many children come to school hungry, and some eat little or nothing other than what they get at school. Parents have cited the lack of food as a reason to keep their children at home as surely as the need for the labor of children at home or concerns about bad weather.

Timely startup and kept promises are important to overcome traditional skepticism about organizations and agencies fulfilling their promises. According to the USDA monitor in Guatemala, the fulfillment of assumed responsibilities, the quickness of the delivery, and the lack of bureaucracy have given the WorldShare/SHARE GFE project a good reputation.<sup>22</sup>

By providing administrative support and avoiding paternalistic attitudes, WorldShare has shown that an organization implementing a GFE project can strengthen the local community's power, skill in project administration, and women's participation.<sup>23</sup> For example, in Nimacabaj, Rabinal, the parents' school nutrition committee has an accounting book in which they record their expenses and collect receipts for purchases. The parent committees administer the funds for the GFE Project, while getting support from the teachers. This avoids misunderstandings in the financial management.

USDA should explore putting a delivery delay assessment in the shipping language for GFE commodities so that the shipper has an incentive to deliver the commodities on time. This would help avoid any late startups due to delayed commodity shipments.

### **Best Practices**

Delivering a modest amount of school supplies to children during the first weeks of school provides significant help to parents, and removes one of the barriers to children's attendance at school.

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<sup>22</sup> Op cit. DataPro Report April 2000.

<sup>23</sup> Op cit. DataPro Report April 2000.

## **Next Steps**

Now that the startup phase is over, WorldShare is planning to carry out the rest of its objectives in the project, including teacher training, strengthening the parent-teacher organizations, organizing de-worming campaigns with the Ministry of Health, working with out-of-school adolescents, and implementing the food-for-work infrastructure repair projects.

Because WorldShare, Plan International, and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) are working in some of the same areas, care will have to be taken to minimize overlap. Japan, through JICA, is financing a new Government of Guatemala effort in school lunches. It will be important that coordination start soon.

## **GFE in Action**

Of all the foods that given to the children, they enjoy fruit the most. The fruit has several positive effects, according to the teachers, because:

- It contributes to the children's health as a source of vitamins.
- Its purchase locally can help stimulate the local economy and local production.
- It is a biodegradable product that leaves no permanent trash.
- It can sometimes have more than one use; in Nimacabaj, for example, the fruit peels are used to feed the school's small colony of rabbits.

Many communities are located far from roads and are not accessible by vehicle. These communities are typically the poorest, but the parents make great efforts to send their children to school. In the hamlet of Jolotes in Huehuetenango, the community is dispersed and children face a 45-minute walk to school. They are often barefoot and have to walk through rain and mud during the six-month rainy season. The poverty of the area can be seen in the school, which offers all six grades of primary school with only one teacher. Nonetheless, the parents and their children who attend school have a commitment to the school. The student government put up screening in the school, which had come down, and parents and students are organizing themselves to do more school improvement work. The parents have asked for help to construct at least one more classroom at the school.

## **Honduras**

### **Catholic Relief Services**

#### **Summary of Findings**

School feeding began in April 2002 with 4,334 children in primary and pre-primary school receiving nutritious breakfasts. Breakfasts included rice, beans, corn-soy blend, milk *atole* (a hot, thin, porridge-like drink), and a complementary food, such as vegetable soup or corn-soy blend empanadas (turnovers). Teachers in almost every school visited to date reported somewhat higher enrollment, the return of dropouts, and improved attendance rates. However, more data are needed for a thorough analysis. Teacher attendance is one of the biggest challenges to improving student enrollment, attendance, and performance. For schools in which parents are responsible for monitoring teacher performance and paying them, teacher absence is low. Feeding is scheduled to continue through November 2002, with an extension through November 2003 pending approval.

#### **Country Overview**

Honduras is one of the poorest countries in Central America and the Western Hemisphere. The situation for the rural poor is even more difficult than for the urban population. While residents of urban areas have an average 6.7 years of schooling, those in rural areas average less than 3.0 years. Rural malnutrition was reported at 42.6 percent by the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) in its proposal to focus its school feeding program in certain areas of the country.<sup>24</sup> Sixty-four percent of the municipalities (190 of 297) find themselves with a high or very high risk of malnutrition.<sup>25</sup>

Widespread destruction from Hurricane Mitch, several years of drought, and a slumping world coffee market have only exacerbated the seriousness of the situation for vulnerable groups. WFP regional experts have reported that the situation in Honduras is similar to that in Guatemala, where they declared an emergency in March 2002 and established feeding centers in 41 regional centers. At this time, the Government of Honduras feels that a designation of "emergency" is unnecessary.

Lempira was chosen as the focus of the Global Food for Education (GFE) program because this is one of the most impoverished areas of the country. It is cut off from most of Honduras by mountains that block television and telephone transmission. Until recently, lack of paved roads and indeed any roads made commerce and trade difficult at best. Most contact for information and commerce has traditionally been with El Salvador.

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<sup>24</sup> WFP Propuesta para Focalizacion de la Actividad de Merienda Escolar, Tegucigalpa, November 2001.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is one of a handful of organizations working in Lempira. It has worked for more than 10 years with a local non-governmental organization (NGO), the Central Committee for Water and the Integrated Development of Lempira (COCEPRADIL), to install community water systems and implement health and sanitation projects.

For the GFE project, CRS proposed to target four municipalities of Jinotega in which the problems of malnutrition, illiteracy, and poverty are among the most severe in the country.

### **Commodity Management**

CRS requested 7,560 metric tons of commodities in the following amounts: corn-soy blend, 90 tons; non-fat dry milk, 50 tons; vegetable oil, 20 tons; and hard red winter (HRW) wheat, 7,400 tons.

The corn-soy blend, non-fat dry milk, and vegetable oil are to be used in direct distribution through feeding and take-home rations. The bulk HRW wheat was monetized, with the proceeds used to implement the project's multiple components designed to increase enrollment, attendance, and performance, and to enhance the learning environment. Delivery of the wheat to be monetized was set for December 2001/January 2002, as was the arrival of the distribution commodities.

The distribution commodity shipment went well, as did the monetization commodity shipment. Monetization began three months later than originally planned because of the delay in the signing of the original agreement between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and CRS. The commodity was monetized successfully, but the delay required that the start of feeding be postponed until April instead of mid-February when school began, as originally planned.

Because Lempira is so isolated and remote, the shipment of the commodities to the COCEPRADIL warehouse and from there to the communities is complex and requires significant coordination and community participation. The first distribution to cover the initial three months of feeding was well organized and efficient. In some cases, parents carried 100-pound sacks of corn-soy blend up the mountainside. The additional challenges during the rainy season will be formidable, although CRS feels confident that its experience in distribution and COCEPRADIL's community base will minimize problems.

There is widespread acceptance of the corn-soy blend as a foodstuff. It is well-received in traditional hot porridge/gruel *atole* drinks. Children like the flavor, and mothers know how to cook it. Parents are required to donate local foods (if they have them) to complement the *atole*. This gives children a more varied diet. Bean and rice purchases in Honduras also stimulate the local economy.

## **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** CRS and its partner in Lempira established goals and objectives for their GFE project. The overall goals are to increase enrollment, attendance, and performance. To achieve these goals, they set the following objectives:

- Carry out direct feeding of 3,750 pre-primary and primary school children.
- Distribute take-home rations for facilitators of the EDUCATODOS distance-learning adult education project.
- Implement de-worming and Vitamin A supplement campaigns in conjunction with the Ministry of Health.
- Design and deliver teacher training programs in health, hygiene, and nutrition.
- Organize and/or strengthen parent education committees to manage the GFE school feeding in their schools.
- Provide some basic supplies to targeted schools.
- Establish community libraries.
- Implement school garden programs.

**Implementation status:** CRS identified project schools, hired staff, entered into agreements with COCEPRADIL, and began planning and community organization activities. CRS personnel worked with WFP and the Honduran Ministry of Education to identify schools and avoid overlap with other feeding programs. CRS also coordinated at the local level with other private voluntary organizations (PVO's) working in the area to minimize overlap of activities.

CRS got a late start in direct feeding because of the delay in agreement signing and delivery of the commodities. However, a significant amount of startup work was accomplished in a short time due to the strength of the community-based NGO, COCEPRADIL, which was started by CRS more than 10 years ago. Based on community water committees, it carries out projects for its 150 member communities and promotes health and sanitation. With around 750 volunteers, the community water committees serve more than 6,000 families in Lempira.

COCEPRADIL visited member communities promoting the GFE project and explaining the requirements for a community to be selected. The requirements included:

- Willingness to build a school kitchen, if necessary.
- Preparation of adequate food storage, including the construction of pallets to keep commodities off the ground and safe from pests.
- Commitment by parents to prepare nutritious breakfasts every school day.
- Willingness of parents to contribute small amounts of food, such as bouillon cubes, vegetables, and fruits.
- Participation of parents in training sessions on safe food handling and meal preparation.
- Commitment of parents to work with the school.

Although CRS planned to carry out feeding in only 50 schools, it ultimately selected 56 schools in five municipalities of Lempira to begin its GFE project. School feeding began in April 2002, with 4,334 children in primary and pre-primary school receiving nutritious breakfasts.

CRS has trained teachers and parents in the control and use of the commodities, as well as in managing the school nutrition committee, tracking and documenting expenditures, and keeping financial records. The transparency of financial records and the detailed recordkeeping required by CRS help build community trust in the project and the workings of the committee, while promoting a closer working relationship between parents and teachers.

CRS and COCEPRADIL provided training to parents, primarily mothers, in how to use corn-soy blend and the other foods to vary the weekly school menu. Daily menus include corn-soy blend empanadas with rice or bean filling, corn-soy blend meatball-vegetable soup, and a crispy doughnut-shaped corn-soy blend *rosquilla*. Other dishes included sweetened rice and milk porridge, refried beans and rice, and the traditional corn-soy blend *atole*.

In addition to the startup work in food storage and preparation, COCEPRADIL worked with parents to survey school infrastructure and needs, including potable water, sanitary latrines, and kitchen and storage facilities. On a recent monitoring trip, seven of the eight schools visited had kitchens, and parents were building a kitchen for the eighth school.

The commitment of the mothers to have breakfasts ready for the children by 7:00 a.m. means that they have to start work very early. In most cases, they must leave home by 4:00 a.m. In some cases, mothers rise as early as 2:00 a.m. or sleep overnight at the school in order to be there on time.

The Government of Honduras has a program called the Family Assistance Program (PRAF) funded by the Inter-American Development Bank. Under this program, mothers whose children are enrolled in school and whose attendance meets PRAF requirements receive a bonus of 50 lempiras per child per month for up to two children. The bonus is used to buy school supplies and other necessities. The program pays the bonus twice a year, selecting delivery dates more for administrative reasons than for maximum impact.

The USDA regional coordinator and the local monitor met with the director of PRAF and shared preliminary results on the months of highest absences and some of the reasons for them. The low-attendance months (May, June, July, August, September, and October) coincide with the season when families have little or no food, need more labor in the fields, and have depleted initial school supplies. Low attendance months also coincide with the height of the rainy season. COCEPRADIL and CRS plan to approach the PRAF director to suggest that bonuses be paid at the beginning of the school year and again in May or June to help counter the factors that result in lower attendance.

Teacher attendance is another major challenge. In 2001, of more than 200 official school days, Honduran teachers attended only 98 days on average.<sup>26</sup> In rural areas, teacher attendance averaged just 60 days. Some of the absences were due to a long strike in a labor dispute with the Ministry of Education over salaries, schedules, and benefits. The labor problems are complicated by the fact that more than half the teachers in Lempira and other rural areas do not live in the communities where they teach. Teachers have to travel to reach their schools and receive and cash their salary checks. When training days, union meetings, and illnesses are factored in, parents in GFE sample schools report that most teachers miss six or seven school days per month.<sup>27</sup>

The USDA regional coordinator and the Honduran monitor have met with the Vice-Minister of Education to share some of the preliminary information and to plan future interventions. The minister and his staff are taking steps to correct these problems.

**Other donor support:** Through its PRAF program, the Government of Honduras distributes bonuses to mothers whose children are enrolled in school and whose attendance meets PRAF requirements. The Ministry of Health is carrying out deworming campaigns in some schools. The Ministry of Education is carrying out a program of HIV-AIDS prevention in some schools. The Honduran Fund for Social Investment is doing some classroom construction.

The National Pedagogical University has worked on curriculum design in some schools and also provides in-service training for some teachers.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) supports Project Lempira Sur that has been working in the area for a number of years teaching sustainable agricultural practices. The WFP has conducted nutrition training in some schools that received school lunches or snacks.

German Technical Assistance has worked on nutrition in some schools, and the Japanese Mission INICIE has also done some work in nutrition in a few schools.

The Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) has worked in curriculum development in one of the schools.

COCEPRADIL has worked in all of the schools in water, sanitation, and health education. The children understand the importance of hygiene; they wash their hands before eating and after using the latrine, and they brush their teeth after eating.

**Sustainability:** The new president of Honduras has made education a top priority. The Minister of Education told USDA that he wants to have a self-sustaining national school feeding program in place within four years. While his long-term interest is to engage the private sector in financing the program, that will probably not be achievable in the first one or two years. He and WFP convinced the Armed Forces Bank to donate 1.00 lempira

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<sup>26</sup>El Heraldo, Tegucigalpa, Feb. 1, 2002.

<sup>27</sup> Jimenez, Pedro. USDA GFE Monitoring and Evaluation Report, May 2002.

to the WFP school feeding program for every telephone bill people pay at that bank. They are encouraging more banks to join the effort.

CRS and COCEPRADIL have a strong relationship with the Association of Mayors of Southern Lempira, forged through many years of working together on local development issues. The association has met with the Minister of Education and called on him to expand GFE to other schools and municipalities of southern Lempira. Such support is important to any long-term sustainability of the project.

Parents have demonstrated strong project support through their high levels of participation and food contributions. COCEPRADIL would like to expand school feeding to other schools, and the Ministry of Education agrees with this goal.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** USDA, CRS, and COCEPRADIL are conducting monitoring and evaluation activities. The Sustainable Development Network NGO in Honduras provides local monitoring. The monitor is skilled in community-based evaluations and carried out the “vulnerability mapping” for WFP in that area before working with USDA. He collected baseline data on the 20 sample schools and has begun collecting qualitative data. He has developed a survey to examine the reasons that parents do not send their children to school and has enlisted students to survey their areas. His response rate is over 80 percent, and the students are enthusiastic about their role in the GFE project.

CRS, COCEPRADIL, and the Sustainable Development Network NGO have coordinated monitoring and evaluation efforts to the extent possible to avoid redundancies while ensuring independence of action. Personnel identified factors that could impact GFE project success, including the availability of a PRAF bonus program, the residence of teachers, and the accessibility of the school by vehicle.

A matrix was developed, and all GFE schools were distributed on the matrix. Schools were then chosen from each cell on a random basis to arrive at the 20 sample schools. Preliminary baseline surveys have been conducted, and data has been collected on the 20 sample schools.

### **Project Impact**

**Enrollment:** Teachers in almost every sample and non-sample school visited to date reported somewhat higher enrollment and the return of dropouts. However, not enough data has been collected for a full analysis. Early indications are that as children find out about the project, they enroll, even if the official enrollment period is over. Their presence may then be reflected only in attendance figures.

**Attendance:** It is uniformly reported that absenteeism has dropped to almost zero. Teachers also report that punctuality has improved. According to teachers and parents, children now stay home from school only when they are sick.

**Performance:** Teachers report that students are more attentive in class, play with more enthusiasm and energy at recess, and learn more quickly. Like Guatemalan teachers, Honduran teachers reported that the children learn lessons more quickly since the school feeding began.

**Special emphasis on girls:** The data has not yet been collected and analyzed to be able to say with any certainty how access for girls has been affected. In gross numbers, more boys than girls are enrolled in 11 of the 20 sample schools. However, when speaking with education and community officials, most report that the problem for enrollment is with the boys. In general, unequal access to education for girls is not seen as being a problem. More troublesome to Hondurans and development groups is the fact that while “the gap between the sexes has almost disappeared, the poor, inhabitants of rural areas, and indigenous groups rarely receive a quality education. And the gaps are not closing.”<sup>28</sup>

**Other project achievements:** One of the measures taken by COCEPRADIL to ensure that there was potable water in all classrooms was the purchase of plastic water containers for each classroom. The containers are filled each day with water to which a suitable amount of chlorine has been added to purify it for the children to drink.

Teachers reported stronger parent-school bonds because they must work together on the feeding, with teachers tracking the commodities and parents providing the complementary food and managing the breakfast and snack preparation.

### **Unanticipated Outcomes**

Mothers trained by COCEPRADIL in new cooking techniques reported that they are using them at school for the children’s breakfasts, and also using the same techniques at home.

Involved parents are serving a public leadership role. Through the work of COCEPRADIL, community members have learned to speak up and work on their problems. The GFE project provided them an opportunity to contribute to improving their children's education. Two communities have contacted the Ministry of Education about school problems. In one case, the community protested the poor attendance of the teacher and requested a replacement plus an additional teacher. This citizen action is a significant step in community activism and self-governance.

In a recent school government election, candidate Rafael Gomez ran on a platform that he was helping to keep the school breakfast program because he was assisting the USDA monitor. He won by an overwhelming number of votes.

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<sup>28</sup> Estudio Programa de la Reforma Educativa en America Latina y El Caribe 2001 (PREAL), cited by WFP in its presentation "Merienda Escolar Honduras 2002."

## **Lessons Learned**

Although it is very early in the Honduras project, some simple lessons have been learned:

- Many children come to school hungry, and some have nothing to eat but the food they receive at school. Hunger keeps children home as surely as does bad weather or the need for their work at home.
- A well-established, community-based organization can substantially increase the impact of school feeding by building on past community engagement and integrating GFE into the overall development goals of the NGO and the communities. COCEPRADIL has widespread credibility, and many of the parents are members themselves.
- Among schools in which the parents monitor teacher performance and pay them, absences by teachers are almost zero.<sup>29</sup>
- Shipping sealed containers from ports to the implementing organization's warehouse reduces losses from damage and leakage.<sup>30</sup>

## **Best Practices**

Putting a container of purified water in each classroom is a cheap, sanitary way to provide potable water to children and sets a good example for their parents.

Teaching parents to use the commodities in creative recipes that children enjoy helps keep the children eating properly.

## **Next Steps**

Now that the startup phase is over, CRS and COCEPRADIL have begun teacher training programs in health and nutrition. These are being coordinated with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to train project personnel on a methodology to educate teachers, families, and children on school and community health and sanitation.<sup>31</sup> To minimize teacher absences, these programs are being planned in conjunction with the Ministry of Education's scheduling. CRS and COCEPRADIL are planning de-worming campaigns with the Ministry of Health and implementing food-for-work infrastructure repair projects.

COCEPRADIL and CRS plan to contact PRAF to discuss preferred distribution dates for the second school bonus. The Association of Southern Mayors may be able to assist them in this effort.

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<sup>29</sup> Op cit. Jimenez.

<sup>30</sup> Commodity Logistics Information Report. CRS/Honduras. May 2002

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

# Honduras World Food Program

## Summary of Findings

Since the devastating impact of Hurricane Mitch, Honduras has been working to improve its infrastructure, including its educational system. Most schools have latrines and over half serviced by the World Food Program (WFP) have kitchens. Parents are involved in their children's education and take prominent roles in preparing food in schools. Enrollment has increased slowly (5 percent per year on average), and the role of food in the learning environment is seen as extremely important to the children and teachers.

## Commodity Management

Food aid serves as an incentive for families to send their children to school and ensures that short-term hunger does not preclude learning. Food-for-learning take-home rations are distributed among girls to increase female literacy. The targeted 96 municipalities have higher illiteracy rates than the national average of 30 percent.

The entire school feeding activity uses cereals, pulses, vegetable oil, corn-soy blend, and sugar in meal preparations. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) contributed the following commodities and quantities for Honduran schools.

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
Corn	6,960	September 2001
Vegetable oil	240	September 2001
Corn-soy blend	850	January 2002

## Project Overview

Lack of education and infant malnutrition are endemic in rural areas in Honduras. The national average level of education completed is only 4.6 years, with an average of less than 3.5 years in rural areas. Enrollment rates for children range from 75 percent in rural areas to 84 percent in urban areas. An estimated 130,000 children do not attend school at all. The high dropout rate (4 percent) is at least partly related to low food intake, which hampers learning. An estimated 69 percent of the adult population is literate, with little difference between male and female literacy rates. School attendance rates for females equal or exceed those for males at all grade levels.

**Goals and objectives:** This WFP project seeks to:

- Increase school enrollment and attendance, and reduce dropout rates.
- Improve student nutrition and health through complementary rations, health care, and sanitation.
- Promote functional literacy, primarily for rural women.

School gardens, whenever possible, add to lessons on the importance of a balanced diet for better nutrition. Partner organizations are undertaking latrine construction and the provision of kitchens and potable water. Teachers and parents receive training in health practices and food handling and preparation. Non-food items such as kitchen utensils, cups and plates, de-worming tablets, and training materials are purchased locally.

**Implementation status:** The beneficiary population is 125,000 boys and girls each year over a five-year period. These children are provided meals in school for 160 days. In addition, 10,000 women yearly receive food-for-learning rations as incentives to attend literacy classes for 80 days. Students benefit from improved access to food and education and from improved health and sanitary conditions. Women have increased opportunities for participation and decision-making at home and in their communities.

The activity's implementation strategy involves careful targeting, with the involvement of municipal councils, of the poorest schools in the selected municipalities.

**Other donor support:** The government's estimated contribution to this program amounts to about \$1.34 million per year, mainly in staff; internal transportation, storage, and handling costs; and the local purchase of non-food items. The Government of Honduras covers all transportation, storage, and handling costs of the WFP-donated commodities up to the municipal warehouses. Government funds will also be used for the local purchase of complementary food commodities to provide a more balanced diet.

### **Project Impact**

- School enrollment rates for boys and girls increased by 10 percent.
- Attendance increased by 15 percent, and dropout rates fell by 10 percent.
- Short-term hunger was relieved; anemia was reduced by 50 percent.
- Access to water and sanitation facilities improved in 30 percent of the schools.
- Functional literacy, primarily for rural women, increased.
- The beneficiary population of 125,000 boys and girls each year is being provided with rations in school for 160 days, and 10,000 women receive food-for-learning rations to attend literacy classes for 80 days.

# Nicaragua

## Project Concern International

### Summary of Findings

Project Concern International (PCI)/Nicaragua began its feeding program in November 2001. When school reopened in February 2002, feeding began for approximately 20,000 students. PCI reported an increase of approximately 14 percent in children fed compared with November 2001. Teachers reported a stronger parent-school-community bond because of their work on the feeding. For this project, the Global Food for Education (GFE) program has helped stimulate local development through contracts to manufacture nutritious cookies and fortified *jícara* drink mix, which are served daily. The program is scheduled to continue through November 2002, with an extension through November 2003 pending approval.

### Country Overview

Of all the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, only Haiti is poorer than Nicaragua.<sup>32</sup> A decade of civil strife and political and economic turbulence exacerbated Nicaragua's chronic poverty. According to the 1995 National Census, in 10 of the seventeen provinces in Nicaragua, more than half the population lives in poverty. In Jinotega, the province targeted for PCI's GFE project, 93 percent of the population lives in poverty, including 74 percent living in extreme poverty.<sup>33</sup> While slightly more than 10 percent of the national population is malnourished, in Jinotega 37 percent of the children age 5 and under are chronically malnourished.<sup>34</sup>

According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Human Development Report, a person needs around 11-12 years of schooling in order to be avoid a life of poverty in Latin America, on average. According to the Nicaraguan National Survey on Level of Life, Nicaraguan women average 5.0 years of schooling and men average 4.8 years.<sup>35</sup> In rural areas, poor and extremely poor people average only 3.1 and 2.3 years of education, respectively. This is well below the assumed threshold of 4 years needed to acquire functional literacy and basic mathematical skills.<sup>36</sup>

In terms of primary school enrollment, gender differences are not very large, but urban/rural differences are: 72 percent of urban children are enrolled in some type of schooling, while only 48 percent of rural children are enrolled. Attendance differences are also striking. While 15.9 percent of students are absent in urban areas, the figure

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<sup>32</sup> National Strategy for Poverty Reduction 2001-2015. Government of Nicaragua.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> National Plan for Educational Development. Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport. 2000.

<sup>36</sup> Op cit. National Strategy for Poverty Reduction.

climbs to 36.7 percent in rural areas. Nationally, of every 100 children who enroll in first grade, 52 percent make it to grade four, and 29 percent finish the six years of primary school.<sup>37</sup>

Destruction from Hurricane Mitch, several years of drought, and the world coffee crisis have exacerbated the economic situation for vulnerable groups. World Food Program (WFP) regional experts have reported that the situation in Nicaragua is similar to, though less severe than, the situation in Guatemala, where they declared an emergency in March 2002 and established 41 emergency feeding centers. However, any combination of factors from more drought to excessive rain could upset the precarious balance in the poor family's survival strategy. There are parts of Jinotega in which GFE is working that have not had rain for several years. There are other areas where people were completely dependent on the coffee industry for their cash income. For those landless rural poor, the lack of any cash leaves them in desperate circumstances.

Within this social and economic context, PCI proposed to target four municipalities in the department of Jinotega in which the problems of malnutrition, illiteracy, and poverty are among the most severe in the country.

### **Commodity Management**

PCI requested commodities in the following amounts: soybean meal, 70 metric tons; wheat, 190 tons; soybean oil (bulk), 1,900 tons; and corn, 230 tons. Because of problems described below, PCI actually received: corn-soy blend, 69.749 tons; corn, 30.102 tons; wheat, 85.970 tons; and refined vegetable oil, 3,349.404 tons.

The corn, wheat, soybeans, and some of the soybean oil were to be used in direct distribution through feeding and take-home rations. The majority of the bulk soybean oil was to be monetized, with the proceeds used to implement the project's multiple components designed to increase enrollment, attendance, and performance, and to enhance the learning environment. Delivery of all the commodities was requested for April/May 2001.

The shipment of commodities for distribution arrived on July 31, 2001, with nearly half of the bagged commodities arriving with water damage from a hatch door left open. They were declared unfit for human consumption by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health and destroyed. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agreed to replace the commodities, and a new shipment of corn-soy blend (to replace soybean meal), corn, and wheat were shipped to Nicaragua, arriving in October and November 2001. The vegetable oil to be monetized arrived July 8, 2001, without problems, and the monetization proceeded normally. The need to replace the distribution commodities had a significant impact because it meant that PCI could not begin feeding until November 2002, the last month of the school year.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

## **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** In order to meet the overall goals of the GFE project, PCI proposed to carry out the following objectives:

- Distribute school breakfasts to all pre-primary and primary school students in four targeted municipalities of Jinotega.
- Using food-for-work rations, improve the educational infrastructure of the schools, including water and sanitation.
- Establish school gardens at GFE schools.
- Provide school supplies and hygiene supplies (towels, soap) for hand washing.
- Ensure that each school has a supply of potable water for the students to drink and for use in preparing the *jícara atole*.
- Develop and deliver teacher training sessions in hygiene, nutrition, and environmental education as components of an integrated food security project.
- Purchase and deliver educational materials to improve the learning environment.

**Implementation status:** PCI has worked in Jinotega department for almost ten years and is well known and widely respected. It has a well-established network of community members who have received training in other PCI programs, as well as close connections with local and ministry officials with whom PCI has worked on other projects, particularly in the area of health. PCI conducted an extensive food-for-work project in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch and at the start of the coffee crisis, which also connected the organization to people within the area.

As soon as the agreement with USDA was signed, PCI began a process of hiring a GFE director and local coordinators to do community promotion of the GFE project. There are four coordinators who cover an extensive area with dispersed communities and schools. They are responsible for working with the parent committees to strengthen the ability of these committees to manage the GFE project, maintain transparent and up-to-date financial records, and identify infrastructure needs for the upcoming food-for-work program to repair schools and improve the learning environment. PCI has trained teachers and parents from each school in the management of the commodities, proper storage and preparation, and recordkeeping. Because the training was given in anticipation of an earlier startup, some of the teachers may need a refresher course this year.

PCI and WFP reached an agreement that in schools where PCI was doing the GFE school breakfast program, WFP would pull out and use its resources in other areas. Schools that still have WFP food on hand will continue to serve a snack or a lunch until their stocks run out. PCI also met with local officials and worked to establish solid relationships with the Ministry of Education delegates at the municipal level and with school directors as well as teachers, particularly those in one- and two-teacher schools. This attention to relationships and the consultation process has meant that there have been virtually no complaints from teachers about the project and the added responsibility they have for recordkeeping.

Project Concern International had a delayed startup in the feeding because of the shipping problem described earlier. However, the delay also had some positive results. For example, the delay gave PCI time to develop a *jícara* mix that included all of the ingredients (corn-soy blend; corn; *jícara* seeds, a local grain high in protein; sugar; cinnamon; and calcium carbonate) to make a thin porridge-like product that is served cold. It also allowed PCI to hold an extensive bidding process in the development of a good-tasting nutritious biscuit to be served as part of the breakfast. A similar competition was held for the *jícara* mix contract. After taste and price competitions, a small, local bakery was chosen to make the biscuits, wrap them in individual packages of two per child, and deliver them in cartons to PCI. The cookie wrappers, like the bags of *jícara* mix, have both the USDA and PCI logos printed on them. A woman-owned small business won the *jícara* mix contract.

After open competition, two small businesses received contracts from PCI to make the GFE cookies and *jícara* mix. The factory has hired five women and 10 men to produce the *jícara* mix, and the bakery has hired seven women and 10 men to produce the cookies. Both businesses are located in small to midsize towns where the impact of the new jobs is substantial.

Another unexpected advantage was that PCI was able to do one month's feeding of 17,200 children (all those attending in November 2001) and get feedback on operational issues and logistics that could be addressed during the school vacation period before the full school year GFE project began.

During the school vacation period, PCI began trial school gardens and had good experiences with six of the eight started. GFE funds were used to purchase garden tools, seeds, and materials. The children became quite involved and active in the garden. Some schools even produced enough to sell at the market to purchase additional food to complement their school feeding program. This experience is being replicated this year during the May-October growing season in 17 schools.

When the commodities finally arrived, the schools had only one month before closing for vacation. Nonetheless, the one-month experience showed that children who had dropped out during the year came back, some as much as two months after last being in school. The children liked the cookies and the *jícara* drink and ate with gusto. This one-month "trial period" may have contributed to the increase in enrollment being seen this year.

Actual school feeding and other project activities began again in February 2002 when school reopened. PCI currently provides a nutritious breakfast to approximately 20,000 school children in the municipalities of Yalí, Pantasma, La Concordia, and San Rafael del Norte. This is an increase of approximately 14 percent above last November's one-month end-of-year numbers. In most schools, the teachers and their students prepare the *jícara* drink and serve it along with a package of the nutritious cookies. It is usually the teacher who keeps track of the number of students fed, amount of food consumed, and the other reporting information required by GFE.

**Other donor support:** The Government of Nicaragua's Ministry of Health (MINSA) conducts de-worming programs. PCI and delegates of the local Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport are coordinating with MINSA to help facilitate this program. FISE (Emergency Social Investment Fund) has carried out an extensive campaign of repair and painting of schools in Jinotega using European Union funding, although some of the one-room schools in remote areas have not yet been reached. MiFamilia, the Ministry for Family and Children, has a feeding and educational program for mothers and children less than 6 years of age that complements GFE. Municipal governments provide transportation of the commodities to the school in many cases.

Some of the GFE schools are also U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) BASE II Project model schools. BASE II supports the improvement of primary school education through a focus on teacher effectiveness, increased community participation in schools, and a strengthened Ministry of Education in support of decentralized education.<sup>38</sup>

**Sustainability:** This is a serious issue to be analyzed once the project becomes fully implemented. There are a number of aspects of this program that are sustainable beyond the GFE project, including teacher training, community empowerment, school gardens, infrastructure development, community support for education, and better educated children. However, the cost of the food and its distribution is one issue that must be addressed in any school feeding program.

PCI is working at the community level with parents and teachers to look for future alternatives for project sustainability. PCI is also exploring the interest and commitment of various governmental agencies to work toward a national school breakfast/feeding program.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Both USDA and PCI are carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities. The non-governmental organization NicaSalud in Nicaragua provides the local monitoring for USDA. The principal monitor is an economist skilled in community-based evaluations. He has completed the initial data gathering and will begin the process of qualitative data collection, leading focus groups of parents, teachers, and students in the next few months.

PCI and USDA have coordinated their monitoring and evaluation efforts to the extent possible to avoid redundancies while ensuring independence of action. In setting up the monitoring and evaluation system, the personnel from both organizations conducted a wide-ranging discussion of the factors that could impact a GFE project's success. The consensus was that the most important factors are the municipalities for various political, economic and social reasons, and the distance the children have to walk to get to school. Staff agreed that distance walked could be strongly related to other important factors. Where children walk more than 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) to school, it is also more likely that those schools would be in less accessible, more remote locations; have poorer infrastructure; have fewer teachers who are less likely to live in the community; and offer

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<sup>38</sup> USAID/Nicaragua concept paper 2002.

less parental support for education and pride in the school. All of these factors would contribute to success or failure of any educational effort. They would also impact the administration and supervision of the project by PCI.

A matrix was developed, and the PCI schools were distributed on the matrix. Schools were chosen from each cell on a random basis to arrive at the 20 sample schools. All twenty sample schools have been visited, as well as some non-sample GFE schools. Preliminary baseline data is available, although most of the comparative figures on attendance will be collected later in the year.

### **Project Impact**

**Enrollment:** Teachers in almost every sample and non-sample school visited to date reported higher enrollment (one reported a 30-percent increase) and the return of past dropouts. However, not been enough data collected for a comprehensive analysis. Early indications are that as children find out about the project, they enroll even if the official enrollment period is over. Their presence is then reflected only in the attendance figures. PCI reports that it is feeding 14 percent more children than in November 2001, when the GFE project began.

**Attendance:** According to reports from teachers and school administrators, absenteeism has dropped to almost nothing. Furthermore, teachers report that punctuality has improved because children do not want to miss breakfast. Both teachers and parents said that the children now stay home from school only when they are truly sick. Enough data has not yet been collected for a full analysis.

In almost every school, there are the “associates.” These “associates” are younger siblings of the enrolled children; parents (primarily mothers) who make the school meal; and the teachers at the school. Almost all of them eat GFE meals/snacks when there is enough left over. There is no appropriate, sanitary, safe storage available for these leftovers. The number of “associates” may be as high as 5-10 percent above the student attendance for the day. There is no place to report on these additional beneficiaries, making cost/meal appear higher than it actually is. Most importantly, there is no way to capture the benefit to pregnant and nursing mothers, infants, and children 0-6 years old who represent the bulk of the “associates.”

**Performance:** Teachers report that students are more attentive in class, play with more enthusiasm and energy at recess, and learn more quickly. Teachers comment that lessons are learned more quickly since the school feeding began.

**Special emphasis on girls:** In Nicaragua, the data has not yet been collected and analyzed to be able to say with any certainty how access for girls has been affected. However, girls have higher enrollment rates than boys, who are removed to work on the family farm or to take other employment to supplement family income. GFE may be an incentive for parents to send their boys to school, and that issue will be tracked.

**Other project achievements:** One of the results of the initial implementation of GFE was that teachers reported a stronger parent-school-community bond. Because they work cooperatively and collaboratively on the feeding, they must work together. This represents a major breakthrough from the perspective of the teachers and school directors.

### **Unanticipated Outcomes**

GFE has helped stimulate local development through the contracts created to manufacture the nutritious cookies and *jícara* mix that are served daily to 20,000 children. The bakery hired 17 people who are involved exclusively in the production of the cookie. The small factory that makes the *jícara* mix hired 15 people to handle its manufacture, packaging, and shipment.

Because water is a crucial need for food preparation and cleanup, parents in some schools have been re-energized to try to resolve longstanding problems with lack of water in the school. In some cases, such as the Wiscanal and Pabona Arriba Schools, for example, children have to bring water to school to make the *atole*. The parents in some communities are focusing their efforts on getting a community water system, or at least a system to supply the school.

Student participation in the GFE project teaches values that, as educators, we are trying to instill:

- Punctuality, because they don't eat if they aren't there when breakfast is served.
- Orderliness, because they have to stand in line to wait to be served.
- Responsibility, because they have to bring their mugs from home.
- Social responsibility, because they have to help serve their classmates.
- Hygiene and personal cleanliness, because they have to wash their hands before being served.

–Lic. Maria Emilia Picado, San Rafael del Norte, Municipal Delegate, Ministry of learning

### **Lessons Learned**

Although it is very early in the PCI project in Nicaragua, some simple lessons have been learned.

Lack of food keeps children home as surely as does bad weather or the need for their work at home. Many children come to school hungry, and some have nothing to eat all day other than the food they receive at school. One school director in Yalí reported that he believed that about 20 percent of the school's 1,770 students (three shifts of classes) have only the GFE breakfast in a 24-hour period.

In many cases, the problem of water rights must be addressed for schools to have a reliable source of potable water. The issue is complex and time-consuming to resolve. Communities alone often cannot solve the problems and need assistance in how to assert their rights under Nicaraguan laws of eminent domain. The private voluntary organization can be instrumental in helping communities make this linkage.

### **Best Practices**

Building and strengthening the relationship with the Ministry of Education, particularly at the local and departmental level, early in the GFE project yields great benefits in terms of support for GFE in the schools.

PCI is putting porcelain water filters in each school to provide safe water for children to drink and for making the *jícara* mix.

### **Next Steps**

Now that the startup phase is over, PCI is beginning to carry out the rest of its objectives in the project. These include developing school gardens; providing teacher training in health and nutrition; using food-for-work rations to enlist community members in the repair and construction of educational infrastructure; and purchasing and distributing educational materials for schools.

PCI will begin working with individual schools to address the potable water issue. In those schools that do not have latrines, PCI will work with the community to address this need.

### **GFE in Action**

At one two-teacher school with 140 students, 60-70 parents attended an early morning meeting at the school with the USDA monitors. Such a high turnout of parents relative to the number of students would be the envy of a PTA in the United States. It was an indication of strong parental interest in and support for the GFE project. The children walk up to two hours each way to attend school, leaving home with a flashlight to light the way. Their parents had to do the same thing in order to arrive on time for the meeting. The parents said that, before GFE, when they did not have food to give their children and would keep their children home because they did not want to send them such a long way to go all day without eating. With GFE, even if they have no food at home, they could send them, confident that their children will receive something to eat at school.

A mother reported to the USDA regional coordinator that her son thinks of the GFE school breakfast as brain food. After two weeks of enjoying the breakfast, her son told her, "I don't know what's with this cookie, but I'm becoming intelligent."

# Nicaragua World Food Program

## Summary of Findings

The Government of Nicaragua has made a commitment to free and compulsory education for all children, particularly those in primary school, and plans to implement a national school feeding program. The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) and other non-governmental organizations are working to help facilitate this effort. The WFP school feeding program supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is part of this ongoing effort.

Enrollment increased for both primary and pre-primary school students, and for both boys and girls. Community participation in the WFP Nicaragua program has been very high. The school feeding program involves many community members. Primary schools with feeding programs had an average of three teachers and 103 community members involved in the activity.

## Commodity Management

WFP Nicaragua requested 15,936 metric tons of commodities in the following amounts:

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
Corn	230	July 2001
	830	August 2001
	3,000	September 2001
	3,200	December 2001
Corn-soy blend	100	July 2001
	968.5	October 2001
Wheat	190	August 2001
	90	December 2001
Vegetable oil	3,380	July 2001
	10	August 2001
	1,790	November 2001
	1,830	December 2001
Corn-soy milk	1,100	September 2001
	1,280	December 2001
Flour	1,350	September 2001
	1,440	December 2001
Soybean meal	70	August 2001

WFP is using the commodities to provide hot lunches to 10,000 pre-school children. In addition, WFP is providing 70,000 primary school children with snacks consisting of high-protein biscuits and fortified beverages to encourage them to return to school and continue studying. The Global Food for Education (GFE) commodities allowed WFP to expand its area of service and number of children served. In addition, WFP and Project Concern International (PCI) coordinated their target areas, allowing WFP to withdraw from the municipalities in which PCI carries out school feeding activities and expand its school feeding to needy students in other areas.

### **Project Overview**

According to the Ministry of Education statistical report of 1998, 26 of every 100 children ages 7–12 do not receive any education. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) estimates out that 700,000 children between ages 2 and 9 years live in difficult circumstances, characterized by insufficient access to food, education, health services, drinking water, and adequate housing.

Primary schools have a 10-percent annual dropout rate, and grade repetition ranges between 5 and 7 percent. Primary school students require an average of 10 years to reach the end of sixth grade. Some socio-cultural patterns affect school dropout rates, such as girls caring for younger siblings. Many students also drop out for financial reasons.

The main problem affecting school-age children is their low food intake and hunger. An estimated two-thirds of pre-school and school-age children in depressed areas start lessons every day without having eaten an adequate breakfast, and often after walking several kilometers. These nutritional problems reduce learning capacity, weaken the children’s dedication to school, and make it difficult for them to participate actively in educational activities.

The government is committed to free and compulsory education for all children, particularly those in primary schools, and plans to begin implementation of a national school feeding program in 2002.

**Goals and objectives:** WFP Nicaragua’s “Investment in Human Capital through Education” activity addresses these issues. Through this activity, WFP supports the school feeding program, placing emphasis on rural primary schools in the most food-insecure areas as identified by vulnerability analysis and mapping. It also promotes pre-primary education to prepare children for primary schools and to increase learning capacity. Assistance includes the provision of enriched, fortified foods to reduce short-term hunger, increase school enrollment and attendance, reduce dropout rates, and increase learning capacity.

**Implementation status:** Cooked meals are prepared for children over 2 years of age in the pre-school centers, with the cooperation of community members who prepare the meals. These children receive corn-soy blend-based drinks fortified with micronutrients. Fortified drinks and biscuits are given in primary schools in the morning to counter

children's short-term hunger and improve concentration. Products are produced locally with the extrusion, milling, and mixing equipment donated by WFP. Approximately 95,000 children divided evenly between boys and girls ages 2 to 12 receive food rations 160 days a year in pre-school centers and primary schools.

**Other donor support:** Community participation is the backbone of this activity. Parent committees and school councils bear the responsibility for the management, control, preparation, and distribution of food. To guarantee integrated care in community pre-school centers, WFP, IDB/PAININ program and the MECD-APRENDE project coordinated activities. The APRENDE project supplies furniture and teaching materials, undertakes infrastructure improvements, pays teachers' salaries, and provides incentives to mobile trainers.

### **Project Impact**

Enrollment increased for both primary and pre-primary school students. Between 1998 and 2001, enrollment for boys increased 10.88 percent in primary schools and 12.38 percent in pre-primary centers. Increases for girls were 9.28 percent for primary and 10.58 percent for pre-primary enrollment. Student-to-teacher ratios have increased slightly for primary schools from an average 35 students per teacher in 1998 to 38 students per teacher in 2001. For pre-primary schools, the ratio was relatively stable at 26-27 students per teacher.

Another important impact is the level of community participation. The school feeding program involves community members. Primary schools averaged three teachers and 103 community members involved in some way with the activity. Pre-primary schools had somewhat lower involvement, with an average of three teachers and 44 non-teachers per school.

# Peru

## World Food Program

### Summary of Findings

The project provides morning snacks with a nutritional complement to relieve short-term hunger and improve the learning ability of preschool and primary school children. The direct beneficiaries of the project are approximately 224,000 pre-school and primary school children in the poorest districts of the Sierra. The snacks are served in two portions and total 113,898,500 beneficiary days. Some families of targeted school children also benefit from an income transfer effect when the school snacks are substitutes for meals at home, rather than supplements.

### Country Overview

More than 50 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, and 20 percent suffer conditions of extreme poverty. In the highlands where conditions are most severe, 68 percent of the population is under the poverty line, and 47 percent live in extreme poverty. The population in the rural highlands survives mainly on subsistence farming.

Nationally, the average illiteracy rate is 10.7 percent, and 17.4 percent for women. In rural areas, the illiteracy rate is 28.1 percent on average and 45.6 percent for women.

Malnutrition is a serious and widespread problem in Peru. In 1991, an estimated 37 percent of children under age 5 were affected by chronic malnutrition, and there are few indications of improvement since then. Malnourished children are more prone to infections that tend to be more severe and long-lasting than well-nourished children. Illnesses and infection, in turn, exacerbate malnutrition through loss of appetite and nutrients. The 1993 National Height for Age Survey of School Entrants (ages 6 to 9 years, 11 months) indicated that malnutrition affected 48 percent of school-age children in the country, and 67 percent in the highlands.

Among other factors, eating habits in the highlands contribute to these conditions. School children in rural areas have the same eating pattern as adults—generally two meals a day of available and inexpensive low-protein commodities. Consumption of meat, fish, and dairy products is constrained by the general poverty of the population. Many children arrive at school without breakfast, which contributes to short-term hunger and reduces learning capacity. Mountain schools lack kitchens and cooking facilities and have scarce fuel supplies. School personnel and parents have limited knowledge of proper food handling and how to prepare safe, nutritious meals, even though they may have access to clean water.

## **Commodity Management**

Over five years, WFP is supplying 100,000 tons of wheat, of which the GFE program is providing 10 percent or 10,000 tons. The wheat is exchanged on a value basis for the equivalent of 113,898,500 rations, each consisting of 250 grams of a prepared dairy drink enriched with vitamins and minerals, and 90 grams of a baked product made of wheat flour mixed with other flours from local grains *quinua*, *cañihua*, and *kiwicha*, as well as local barley and corn. Each ration will have a nutritive value of 600 calories, with 22.5 grams of protein, 20 grams of fat, and a vitamin and mineral supplement with 13.2 milligrams of iron. The rations prepared and served in two morning snacks are well accepted by target groups. The makeup of the ration facilitates its distribution and allows for easier monitoring.

An additional 2,500 tons of wheat will be provided by other donors and monetized to cover the costs of a non-governmental organization (NGO) that will be contracted by the Government of Peru to implement the project on its behalf. The NGO, selected through public notice, will be responsible for conducting the project, which includes defining the specifications of the commodities, establishing the criteria and procedures for selecting the food processors, carrying out quality control inspection of the food chain, and monitoring and evaluating the project's impact.

## **Project Overview**

Peru is a low-income, food-deficit country. The educational system has been adversely affected by economic conditions and civil disturbances. A World Bank project to improve educational quality, institutional development, and infrastructure will complement the school feeding project. The Government of Peru's national school feeding program reaches 1.85 million students out of the 3 million requiring food support, with feeding programs coordinated by the Ministry of Education and assisted by the European Union, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and WFP. An additional 224,000 students will benefit from this project. It will include nutrition, health, and hygiene instruction with manuals and demonstrations at schools. The WFP-supplied wheat will be exchanged through monetization for a locally produced enriched snack consisting of a dairy drink and a baked biscuit or *panetón*, enriched with minerals and vitamins.

### **Goals and objectives:**

- Overcoming short-term hunger and reducing the incidence of anemia with a dietary supplement for pre-school and primary school children, leading to an improved ability to learn.
- Stimulating the knowledge of proper feeding and hygiene of the targeted children.
- Extending the government's school feeding programs into the more remote districts of the Sierra, with the provision of schooling on an equitable gender basis.

Food aid will function as:

- A dietary supplement to overcome short-term hunger and reduce the prevalence of anemia.
- An incentive to teachers to promote the values of hygienic food preparation and more nutritionally-oriented eating habits.
- A budgetary support to the Ministry of Education to enable it to reach a greater number of communities in the rural highlands with educational services.

**Other donor support:** The Ministry of Education will be responsible for supplying items to meet requirements related not only to educational functions, but also to the hygienic and efficient preparation and distribution of the food rations. These include fuel-efficient stoves, kitchens and serving equipment, utensils, detergents, soap, tables for food distribution, and training manuals and educational posters.

### **Project Impact**

The outputs of the project will be:

- A morning snack for 158 days per year to approximately 37,000 preschool and 187,000 primary school children in targeted areas, consisting of 109,400 boys, 114,600 girls, and teachers and parents who are directly involved in food preparation at the schools.
- An increase in the developmental skills of pre-school children and in the performance of primary school children, and an increase in the learning capacities of pre-school and primary schoolchildren in terms of attention, retention, and comprehension.
- A progressive improvement in hygienic practices supported by manuals and supervised by teachers.
- A reduction in the prevalence of nutritional anemia.
- An additional 3,291 schools incorporated into the national school feeding program (representing a 20-percent decrease in the proportion of preschool and primary school children previously not covered by school feeding).